

starting out:
the grünfeld

JACOB AAGAARD



EVERYMAN CHESS

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Preface

This book on the Grünfeld Defence is part of the *Starting Out* series books by Everyman Chess. These books were originally meant to target beginners and less experienced club players who wanted to obtain some kind of overview of the opening, but it has turned out that even very strong players have found this series beneficial. We all need a well explained and guided introduction when we begin to study a new opening, and seasoned professionals can be on the international tournament circuit for years without finding the time to delve deeply into the basics of a particular opening. A main reason for this is that many players now prepare a new opening for each game, with the hope of catching their opponents off guard. In this way true depth is seldom obtained.

This book is not meant to be exclusive but inclusive. It is not written with any specific target audience in mind, but with an intention of being as clear and basic as possible.

What this book is trying to do is to give you a good introduction to what the Grünfeld Defence is all about, what lines there are and how they have been played. This is not a standard theoretical work as much as it is an introduction, both historically and theoretically. In the choice of games a great emphasis has been paid to the instructive and entertainment value rather than whether the actual line is completely critical. The reasons for these choices are simple: theory will continue to move fast and evaluations change from year to year, but the typical concepts of the opening change more slowly and the glory of brilliant games will never fade. The idea is that this book will also make sense in five years time.

The different features in this book

As with previous books in the *Starting Out* series, there are numerous features designed to help the reader absorb important ideas. These include the following:

NOTES, TIPS and WARNINGS: These contain important points about a particular variation, the opening as a whole or chess in general.

Statistics: The statistics throughout this book are calculated by ChessBase and based on the available games from ChessBase Online in May 2003. Note that usually White has a score of 55% in modern games, so a 48% score for Black in a variation is quite okay, while 43% is close to normal as well, and certainly not low enough to make anybody nervous about playing the line for Black.

Theoretical?: A short discussion on each variation about how important it is to remember the theory and how much can be found at the board.

Finally, I would like to thank Danny Kristiansen for reading large parts of the book and giving me a chance to correct several mistakes. For those remaining the only defence which I can think of here and now is that Danny went on a fishing expedition shortly before the deadline.

Thank you, Danny.

Jacob Aagaard,
Copenhagen,
December 2003

Introduction

Introduction to the Grünfeld Defence

The Grünfeld is one of the most complex and energetic modern openings. Throughout history it has been a favourite weapon for many dynamic and positional players, including four of the greatest world champions: Alekhine, Botvinnik, Fischer and Kasparov. The opening was invented by Ernst Grünfeld in 1922 and first introduced in his game against the world champion-to-be Alexander Alekhine.

Game 1

□ Alekhine ■ Grünfeld

Vienna 1922

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 Bg5 Ne4 5 cxd5 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Qxd5 7 Nf3 Bg7 8 e3 c5 9 Bb5+ Bd7 10 c4 Qe4 11 0-0 Bxb5 12 cxb5 Nd7 13 Rc1 b6 14 Qb3 h6 15 Bh4 0-0 16 Rc4 Qe6 (Diagram 1)

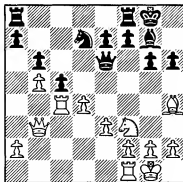


Diagram 1
A complex position

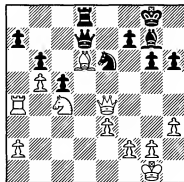


Diagram 2
Spot the tactic

A complex situation has arisen, even though some minor pieces have been exchanged. Black has good long-term prospects on the queenside and White has some initiative in the centre.

17 Rd1 Rfe8 18 d5 Qd6 19 Bg3 e5 20 dxe6 Qxe6 21 Rd6 Qe7 22 Ra4 Nf8 23 Qd5 Rad8 24 Nd2 Rxd6 25 Bxd6 Rd8 26 Nc4 Qd7 27 h3 Ne6 28 Qe4 (Diagram 2) 28...Bf8!

A brilliant combination that wins the exchange.

WARNING: Loose pieces drop off!



This is a dictum popularised by John Nunn. It means that unprotected pieces are more likely to fall into shadow as the result of a tactical operation. Some players, like Karpov and Kasparov, more or less always have their pieces overprotected just in case.

29 Bxf8 Qd1+ 30 Kh2 Qxa4 31 Be7 Re8 32 Bf6 Ng7 33 Qd3 Qxa2 34 Bb2 Re6 35 Qc3 f6 36 Qd3 h5 37 e4 Qa4 38 Nd6 Qb4 39 Nc4 Qxb5 40 f4 Qc6 41 e5 f5 42 Nd6 Re7 43 Qg3 Kh7 44 Qg5 Qd7 45 Qg3 Ne6 46 Qf3 b5 47 Qa8 Qd8 48 Qd5 b4 49 g3 a5 50 Qc6 Qd7 51 Qa6 a4 52 Ba1 a3 53 Qc4 Qc6 54 Kg1 Qf3 55 Kh2 Qf2+ 0-1

Alekhine resigned by throwing his king across the room. What a debut for the Grünfeld Defence! Actually, Alekhine quickly became a great follower, and later that year was already defending the black side.

What is the Grünfeld?

But what is the Grünfeld and what kind of positions arrive from the Grünfeld Defence?

The first moves 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 seem to indicate that Black will opt for quick castling and only then start to fight for control of the centre. This is called the King's Indian Defence and often gives quite a closed position. But after 3 Nc3 it is also possible to play 3...d5! (Diagram 3), immediately fighting in the centre.

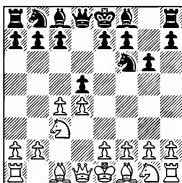


Diagram 3
The Grünfeld Defence

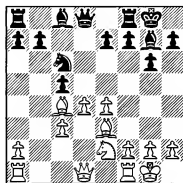


Diagram 4
The Grünfeld Centre

Here White has a great variety of possibilities. The two main systems start with 4 Nf3 Bg7 and with 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7. In this position White again has plenty of opportunities, ranging from 7 Bb5+ and 7 Qa4+ to 7 Nf3 and 7 Bc4. After 7 Bc4 it is customary for Black to set up a counterplay against White's centre with 7...c5 8 Ne2 Nc6 9 Be3 0-0 10 0-0 (Diagram 4).

The pawn structure here is unsurprisingly known as the Grünfeld centre. Though many different structures can occur from the Grünfeld Defence, they all have one thing in common: Black allows White to establish a strong, broad centre with the intention of putting it under pressure. Black in the Grünfeld has won many games by a successful demolition of the white centre. Conversely, White has won many games by keeping a big centre and utilising it at a favourable moment.

The Grünfeld Defence is certainly not for people with weak nerves. Black will often face heavy aggression, but in return he can end up in a pleasant endgame with a distant passed pawn on the queenside. The ideal endgame for Black probably looks something like this:

Game 2

□ Ellskases ■ Flohr

Baden Semmering 1937

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 Bf4 Bg7 5 e3 0-0 6 Nf3 c5 7 cxd5 Nxd5 8 Be5 Nxc3 9 bxc3 cxd4 10 Bxg7 Kxg7 11 cxd4 Qa5+ (Diagram 5)

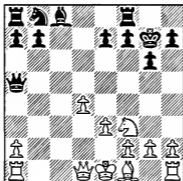


Diagram 5

A typical Grünfeld check

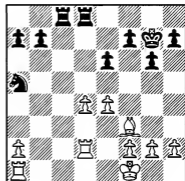


Diagram 6

Black alters the structure

Black seeks the endgame because he has the potential passed pawn on the queenside. This is not a big advantage, but a tiny plus which compensates fully for White's strong centre. In the following moves Black simply outplays his opponent, neutralises the centre's importance and achieves a favourable endgame.

12 Qd2 Nc6 13 Be2 Rd8 14 Qxa5 Nxa5 15 0-0 Be6 16 e4?

White does not realise that the endgame is just around the corner, and that this move weakens the d4-pawn and puts the e-pawn on a light square, the square of the bishop. Probably White was surprised by Black's next move.

16...Bg4!

A typical Grünfeld move. The d-pawn now becomes fragile by the removal of its central defender.

17 Rfd1 e6 18 Kf1 Bxf3!

White was threatening 19 Ng1!, saving the most valuable piece.

19 Bxf3 Rac8 20 Rd2 (Diagram 6) 20...e5!

Black changes the structure so that it favours his knight, which achieves a fantastic blockading square on d6. This, combined with the distant passed pawn, is enough for the strong grandmaster Salo Flohr to win the game.

21 d5 Nc4 22 Re2 Nd6 23 Rb1 Rc4 24 g3 Rdc8 25 Bg2 Rc1+!

This exchange prevents White from creating any active counterplay with his rooks and thus increases Black's advantage.



TIP: When you evaluate an exchange, look at the value of the pieces that remain just as much as of the value of the pieces you exchange.

26 Rxc1 Rxc1+ 27 Re1 Rxe1+?!

This exchange does not seem to help Black, as his rook is much more active than the white counterpart. The exchange of one pair of rooks was useful as White now cannot create any violent counterplay, but the exchange of this second pair seems to be in White's favour.

Better was 27...Rc4! followed by ...Kf8-e7-d8-c7, after which Black would push his pawns on the queenside. Another idea is to play ...f5 and fix the centre. The idea with exf5 and f4 does not work here (see the note to White's 29th move) as the existence of the rooks on the board prevents White's king from storming out into the centre and controlling d4.

28 Kxe1 f5!?

With this move Black is trying to prevent counterplay with 29 f4. The question is whether this could not have been met with 29...f6!?. It is hard to see how White could benefit from this in any way. If he tries to undermine Black's pawn with g3-g4, intending g4-g5, Black will not hesitate to play ...g6-g5!, fixing another white pawn on a light square.

29 f3?!

Euwe evaluates the alternative as just that, an alternative, but I have a feeling that it would have given White a much more realistic chance of making a draw. Euwe analyses 29 exf5!? and now:

a) 29...gxf5 30 f4! e4 gives White control of the d4-square. Even though his d-pawn is no longer supported by a pawn and even though

the black e-pawn is now passed, it is still White who has gained most from this development.



TIP: In endgames with minor pieces the king is the strongest piece and should be dealt with as such.

b) 29...Nxf5! 30 Kd2 Kf6 31 Kd3 Ke7 32 Kc4 Kd6 33 a4 a6 and Black has a very strong position, but whether it is enough to win is hard to say. Euwe gives the following line: 34 a5 Ne7 35 f4 exf4 36 gxf4 Nc8 37 Be4 b5+ 38 axb6 Nxb6+ 39 Kd4 a5, when the outside passed pawn gives Black good chances, but White has some counterplay with the bishop and the rather limited number of pawns.



TIP: In endgames where one side has the advantage, the aggressor often wants to exchange pieces, while the defender wants to exchange pawns.

A simplification of this is that you cannot win with a knight and king against king, but you *can* with pawn and king versus king. In the game there is only one exchange of pawns.

29...fxe4 30 fxe4 b5 31 Kd2 a5 32 Kd3 Kf6 33 Bf3 Ke7 34 h4?

This move, keeping the pawns on dark squares, looks normal, but actually it is a terrible mistake. Now the g3-pawn is seriously weakened, and it is much more accessible than the pawn on h2 was. Now White will have to defend even better to keep realistic chances of saving the game.

The correct choice, as pointed out by Euwe, was to go for 34 Bd1 Kd8 35 a4! to establish a blockade of the queenside, when White still has some drawing chances.

34...h6!

Not allowing 34...Kd8? 35 g4!, followed by g4-g5, when White will achieve counterplay against h7 with Bf3-g4-e6-g8, securing a draw.

35 Bd1 Kd8 36 a4 (Diagram 7)

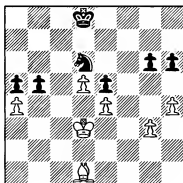


Diagram 7
Push or capture?

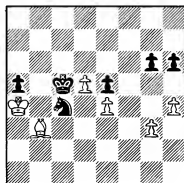


Diagram 8
White slips up

36...bxa4?

Black obviously fears that he will not be able to win the endgame if White creates a blockade of the queenside, and therefore he allows this exchange, which is wrong in principle for several reasons. First of all, the a-pawn is now less secure than a safely guarded b-pawn would be. Secondly, White has obtained yet another exchange of pawns.

Euwe proved that Black could win after 36...b4! 37 Bb3 Kc7 38 Bd1 Kb6 39 Bc2 (White can also try to give Black the move at move 41, but after 39 Bb3 Nb7 40 Kc4 Nc5 41 Bc2 h5! White has run out of moves) 39...Nb7 40 Kc4 Nc5 41 g4 g5! 42 h5 b3! (an important finesse) and now:

- a) 43 Bxb3 Nxe4 followed by ...Nd6+ and the black king will march in, free the knight from keeping an eye on the d-pawn. The knight will manoeuvre to f6, after which both d5 and g4 will be hard to defend.
 b) 43 Bb1 b2 44 Kc3 Nxa4+ 45 Kb3 Nc5+ 46 Kxb2 Nd7! and White will not be able to hold both the e- and g-pawns. From here on his position will go rapidly downhill.

37 Bxa4 Kc7 38 Bc2 Kb6 39 Kc3!

White immediately goes for the elimination of the black trump.

39...Kb5 40 Kb3 Kc5 41 Ka4 Nc4 42 Bb3? (Diagram 8)

A sad mistake that simply blunders the g-pawn. It was not easy to see how Black could make progress, as after 42 Bb1! Nd2 43 Bd3 he has no apparent way to improve his position. A standard trick would be 43...Kd4? 44 d6! and suddenly White wins.

42...Nd2 43 Bc2 Nf1

Now Black will be first. Often this is the case when one deals with distant passed pawns. Their main function is to side-track the opponent's king.

44 Kxa5 Nxc3 45 Ka4 Nh5 46 Kb3 Kd4 47 Kb4 Nf6 48 d6 g5 49 hxc5 hxc5 50 Kb5 g4 51 Bd1 g3 52 Bf3 Ke3 53 Bh1 Kf2 54 Kc6 g2 55 Bxc2 Kxc2 56 d7 Nxd7 57 Kxd7 Kf3 0-1

A very nice performance by Flohr, despite a few inaccuracies.

Probably the most famous game ever played in the Grünfeld Defence was once called 'Game of the Century', where a young boy from New York initiated a tactical battle with his experienced opponent, ending up sacrificing his queen for a deadly initiative and a large number of footmen.

Game 3

D.Byrne Fischer

New York 1956

1 Nf3 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 d4 0-0 5 Bf4 d5

Only here does it become a Grünfeld Indian. Fischer usually preferred to play the King's Indian, especially in his youth, but from time to time the devil got a hold on him and he took a chance on the Grünfeld.

6 Qb3 dxc4 7 Qxc4 c6 8 e4 Nbd7

8...b5! 9 Qb3 Qa5 with the idea of ...b5-b4 was later thought of as stronger.

9 Rd1 Nb6 10 Qc5 Bg4 11 Bg5?

This walks into a fantastic piece of geometry. Better is a quiet developing move like 11 Be2, which gave White a slight edge in Flear-Morris, Dublin 1991.

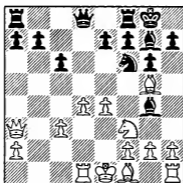


Diagram 9
Calm before the storm

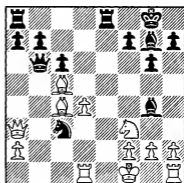


Diagram 10
Black unleashes a corker

11...Na4!!

The geometry from a4 to c3 and c5 over e4 to g5 is amazing. Now Black has a very powerful attack.

12 Qa3

White is also in a very bad way after 12 Nxa4 Nxe4 13 Qc1 Qa5+ 14 Nc3 Bxf3 15 gxf3 Nxc3 – it is unlikely he will hold.

12...Nxc3 13 bxc3 (Diagram 9) 13...Nxe4!

To many this will probably be the hardest move in the game to find. The exchange sacrifice is not really a risk for Black, as White is so far behind in development that the game is likely to be decided before he is able to develop his rook from h1. Therefore Black has no hesitation offering material, as long as he gets some tempi in return.

14 Bxe7 Qb6 15 Bc4!

White finally starts to develop his pieces. He could try to slip into an endgame with 15 Bxf8? Bxf8 16 Qb3 Nxc3! 17 Qxb6 axb6, but the exchange of queens is hardly a relief: 18 Ra1 (Black picks up many pawns after 18 Rd2 Bb4 19 Rb2 Nxa2+ 20 Kd1 Bc3 21 Rb3 Bxd4,

while White still has to develop fully) 18...Re8+ 19 Kd2 Ne4+ 20 Kc2 Nxf2 21 Rg1 Re3 and, despite the exchange of queens, Black continues to dominate the position and threaten the white king.

15...Nxc3! 16 Bc5?

This move has gone by without much comment in the past. But, as we shall see, White still has some chances to defend. He should cut his losses with 16 Qxc3! Rfe8 17 0-0! (previously the only interest has been 17 Bxf7+ Kxf7 18 Ng5+ Kxe7 19 0-0 Bxd1 20 Rxd1 Qb5, when Black should win) 17...Rxe7 18 Rde1 and White can seek some comfort in the possibility of opposite-coloured bishops with ...Bxf3. Well, at least he has castled.

16...Rfe8+ 17 Kf1 (Diagram 10)

Now comes a combination of uncommon beauty, one of the most brilliant in the history of chess.

17...Be6!!

The fragility of White's king and the a6-f1 diagonal is fully exposed by this move. Conversely, following 17...Nb5? 18 Bxf7+! Kxf7? (18...Kh8! is relatively better, but this is not what Black was looking for) 19 Qb3+ Be6 20 Ng5+ it is suddenly Black who is under a dangerous attack.

18 Bxb6

White decides to walk the plank. He is mated after 18 Bxe6 Qb5+ 19 Kg1 Ne2+ 20 Kf1 Ng3+ 21 Kg1 Qf1+! 22 Rxf1 Ne2 – a nice, original version of the smothered mate. 18 Qxc3 is met by 18...Qxc5! 19 dxc5 Bxc3 20 Bxe6 Rxe6, when White has no chance to save this endgame a pawn down. Finally, 18 Bd3 Nb5! would simply allow Black to get out of the complications with an extra pawn and better placed pieces.

18...Bxc4+ 19 Kg1 Ne2+ 20 Kf1 Nxd4+ 21 Kg1

Or 21 Rd3 axb6 22 Qc3 Nxf3 and White is either mated or loses everything.

21...Ne2+ 22 Kf1 Nc3+ 23 Kg1 axb6 24 Qb4 Ra4 25 Qxb6 Nxd1

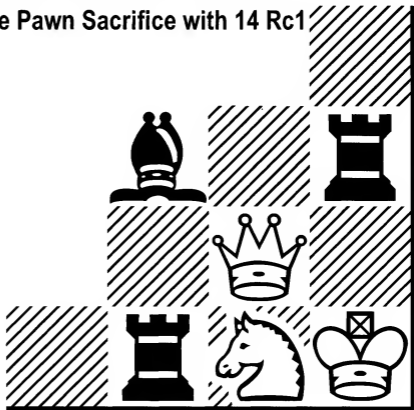
Black has emerged from the tactics well ahead on material and now easily converts the advantage to a full point.

26 h3 Rxa2 27 Kh2 Nxf2 28 Re1 Rxe1 29 Qd8+ Bf8 30 Nxe1 Bd5 31 Nf3 Ne4 32 Qb8 b5 33 h4 h5 34 Ne5 Kg7 35 Kg1 Bc5+ 36 Kf1 Ng3+ 37 Ke1 Bb4+ 38 Kd1 Bb3+ 39 Kc1 Ne2+ 40 Kb1 Nc3+ 41 Kc1 Rc2 mate! (0-1)

With this we now turn to the first of the main lines of the Grünfeld Defence.

Classical Exchange: Main Lines

- Introduction
- The Seville Variation
- The Sokolsky Attack: 14 d5
- The Pawn Sacrifice with 14 Rc1



Introduction

The Classical Exchange Variation is one of the three main systems for White in the Grünfeld (the two others being the Modern Exchange Variation and the Russian System). The main position arises after 11 moves, after which it is up to White to make his choice.

Firstly, let's look at the opening moves:

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Bc4 0-0 8 Ne2

Different organisations of White's minor pieces can be found in Chapters 3 and 4.

8...c5

Alternatives for Black can be found in Chapter 2.

9 Be3 Nc6 10 0-0

Black has put as much pressure as possible on the centre with ...c5 and his minor pieces, and White in turn has protected his centre.



WARNING: For positional reasons, it is not a particular good idea to accept the pawn sacrifice on c5.

After 10 dxc5 Black can quickly gain plenty of compensation, either by slow play with 10...Qc7 and 10...Qa5 or with immediate action such as 10...Ne5!? 11 Bb3 Qc7. After the latter White needs to act quickly in order not to be worse and should go for 12 Nf4 e6!, when Black has good compensation but White also should not be too unhappy. It's important to realise that Black will often sacrifice a pawn with ...b6, allowing the exchange of the weak c5-pawn, as this same pawn is also somewhat restricting for Black. In return Black secures open files on which to attack the pawns on c3 and a2. Note that Black is much worse after 12...Ng4? 13 Nd5! Nxe3? 14 Nxc7 Nxd1 15 Rxd1 Bxc3+ 16 Ke2 Rb8 17 Nd5! Bf6 18 Nxf6+ exf6 19 Ke3 – White has good winning chances in this endgame.

10 e5 is also not a common move, as after this Black will find it easy to establish control of the light squares straight away. The white bishop on e3 could easily become very ugly in the long run, while conversely the g7-bishop may later escape via f8.

10...Bg4

Again Black has alternatives – see Chapter 2.

11 f3 Na5 (Diagram 1)

In this system it is all about the struggle for the centre. White has managed to organise his pieces in such a way to maintain his centre, but that doesn't mean that Black's strategy has failed. White has been forced to make concessions to keep his centre intact. 11 f3 was necessary to break the pin on the e2-knight, but this has left the e3-bishop and the dark squares in general undefended.

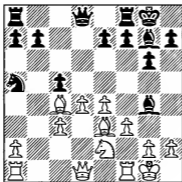


Diagram 1
Classical Exchange Variation

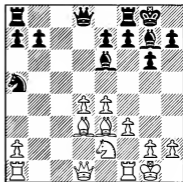


Diagram 2
A popular position

Black's idea with 11...Na5 is to play around the white pawns and establish a stronghold on c4. But first White has an interesting possibility in 12 Bxf7!?, winning a pawn in return for some positional compensation. This is called the Seville Variation – it was reintroduced by Karpov against Kasparov in their 1987 world championship match in Seville. Before this it had been known to be generally harmless for Black, but Karpov arrived for the match with a new understanding of the positional features in the position, and gained the advantage in many games between the two.

It's more standard to refrain from winning the pawn with 12 Bd3, which is most often answered with 12...cxd4 13 cxd4 Be6, aiming at the c4-square (**Diagram 2**).

Now there are two very interesting possibilities for White. Firstly, there is the tempting 14 d5!?, a move very much for the brave. This, of course, involves an exchange sacrifice and is an attempt to unbalance the game. Many years ago it was the main choice for some time. Then White had a bad decade in the 1980s and players started to look elsewhere for improvements. However, recently Kobalija has revived the line and it is now considered as relevant as ever. The choice to include three games in this book is mainly due to my fascination with the line, but also because it has not been covered well enough in other recent Grünfeld works.

While 14 d5 was being repaired, White players enjoyed some success with the pawn sacrifice 14 Rc1!?. The idea is similar to 14 d5: material is offered in order to prevent 14...Bc4 and to gain some time for developing pieces. Time has shown that this is not particularly dangerous for Black and the popularity of 14 Rc1 has somewhat waned. Still, this is a very relevant line and the score for White is more than he would normally expect in a main line of an opening.

The Seville Variation

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Bc4 0-0 8 Ne2 c5 9 Be3 Nc6 10 0-0 Bg4 11 f3 Na5 12 Bxf7+ (Diagram 3)

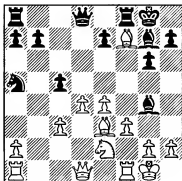


Diagram 3
The Seville Variation

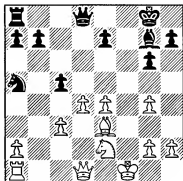


Diagram 4
The main line

As I mentioned before, Karpov reintroduced this variation against Kasparov in their 1987 match with some success. The main idea behind the system is not so much to win a pawn, as to play against Black's bishop on g7. White usually obtains a set-up with a pawn on e5 and, if he is lucky, also a pawn on g5, completely burying the bishop. This kind of play suited Karpov particularly well, as his main strength is to restrict his opponents' opportunities to a level where they end up wondering why they put their pieces on such stupid squares.

After 12 Bxf7+ the game continues 12...Rxf7 13 fxg4 Rxf1+ 14 Kxf1 (Diagram 4).

Here we shall look at two games. In Game 4 White's strategy is completely successful, while in Game 5 we see what Black players eventually did about this. Within Game 5 there is an alternative approach to the almost forced draw chosen by Kasparov, where GMs Liss and Nijboer have managed to create active play for the pawn, using their queenside majority to play for a win.

Statistics

In 373 games, White has scored 52%, while 42% of all the games have been drawn. This line has a reputation for being a little bit boring, but in reality the position is very much unbalanced, and both players have real chances to win the game.

Theoretical?

Mainly from Black's point of view, but not terribly so. It seems to be more pressing to know how to create counterplay than how to defend against it because if nothing happens, Black will find himself a pawn down and seriously close to being lost. That said, these positions are about chess strength as much as chess theory.

Game 4

□ Karpov ■ Kasparov

Belfort 1988

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Bc4 c5 8 Ne2 Nc6 9 Be3 0-0 10 0-0 Bg4

10...Na5 11 Bd3 Bg4 is not a good way to avoid the Seville Variation, as there is no longer so much pressure on d4. Probably best is 12 Rb1!, preparing to vacate the a1-h8 diagonal and also occupying the open file.

11 f3 Na5 12 Bxf7+!?

A minor line that sometimes occurs starts with 12 Bd5. Black usually continues with 12...cxd4 13 cxd4 Bd7 14 Rb1 a6! 15 Bxb7 Ra7 16 Bd5 Bb5 17 a4 Bxe2 18 Qxe2 e6 and 19...Bxd4 with full equality, as in Spassky-Timman, Bugojno 1978 (amongst others).

12...Rxf7 13 fxg4 Rxf1+ 14 Kxf1 Qd6

This is the way it was played in the 1980s (for the modern treatment, see Game 5). In the 'old days' 12 Bxf7+ was not considered very serious because of 14...cxd4 15 cxd4 Qb6!? 16 Kg1 Qe6. But then Zaitsev came up with 17 Qd3! Qxg4 18 Rf1 and White is better (Karpov-Kasparov, 9th match game, Seville 1987). The pawn is returned, but White has managed to keep his impressive centre and the exchange on d4 has not been in Black's interest.

15 e5 Qd5 16 Bf2!

This move is typical of Karpov's style. White has a long-term advantage if Black is unable to create counterplay, and therefore he minimises both the effect of ...Nc4 (it no longer hits the bishop) and ...Rf8 (this is no longer check).

White has no chance for an advantage after 16 g5 Qe4 17 Bf2 Rf8 18 Ng1 Nc4 19 Nf3 Ne3+ 20 Bxe3 Qxe3 21 Qb3+ Kh8 22 Re1 Qxg5 23 Qxb7 and now 23...Qd2! was the move that solved all of Black's problems in this line: 24 Qxe7 (24 dxc5 Qxc3 25 Qd5 Bh6 26 c6 Bf4 27 Re4 Qc1+ 28 Re1 Qc3 29 Re4 ½-½ Beliavsky-Kasparov, Linares 1992) 24...Qd3+ 25 Re2 cxd4 26 cxd4 Qd1+ 27 Re1 Rxf3+ 28 gxf3 Qxf3+ 29 Kg1 Qg4+ with a draw by perpetual check, Lukas-Horvath, Budapest 1992.

16...Rd8

Black has another (preferable?) treatment in 16...Rf8!? 17 Kg1 Bh6 18 h4 Qf7 19 Bg3 Be3+ 20 Kh2 Qc4!, when White is only very slightly better, Karpov-Kasparov, 5th match game, Seville 1987.

17 Qa4!?

A new move prepared for this game. The idea is that the knight on a5 loses its ability to return to e6 in many positions, or at least it will be unguarded if it does return there. This subtle move is different, but whether it is better than 17 Qc2, which has also been played on numerous occasions, is hard to tell.

17...b6 18 Qc2! Rf8 19 Kg1 Qc4! 20 Qd2 Qe6

20...Bh6 21 Qxh6 Qxe2 22 Qe3 would secure White an advantage in the endgame – ideas involving dxc5 start to become relevant. And 20...Qf7 is answered by 21 Ng3!, heading for the ideal square on e4.

21 h3 Nc4 22 Qg5! (Diagram 5)

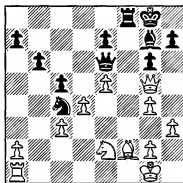


Diagram 5
White provokes ...h6

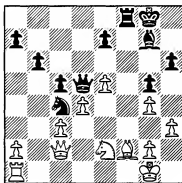


Diagram 6
White regroupes

The strategy for White is not to allow Black to get the g7-bishop into play.

If 22 Qc1 White has no way of bringing the rook into play without moving the queen again. A good response here is 22...b5!? to undermine the centre completely with 23...b4!?



NOTE: Often White is happy to give back the extra pawn in return for keeping the black bishop behind a safe lock. This can often be achieved with g4-g5 at the right moment.

22...h6 23 Qc1!

Now Black has locked his own bishop in.

23...Qf7

After 23...Qd5 24 Qc2! another drawback behind 22...h6 becomes visible: the weakness of the g-pawn.

24 Bg3 g5?!

Played to prevent Nf4, but after this Black is in serious trouble. It has been suggested that Black should have tried 24...Qd5!? 25 Nf4 Qe4 26 Ne6, but even here it is obvious that Black is getting outplayed. The bishop on g7 will never influence events and White simply has an extra pawn, for example:

a) 26...Rc8 walks into a typical reaction: 27 Qb1! Qe3+ 28 Bf2 Qxc3 29 Qxg6 Qxa1+ 30 Kh2 and Black will be mated.

b) 26...Ne3 27 Qd2! Nc4 28 Qe1 Ne3 29 Qe2 cxd4 30 Nxf8 Bxf8 31 cxd4 Qxd4 32 Re1 and Black does not have enough for the exchange. Note that 32...Nxg4+ 33 Kh1 leaves Black without a knight as well as a rook.

c) 26...cxd4! (obvious desperation) 27 Nxf8 Ne3 28 Qd2 dxc3 29 Qf2 Bxf8 30 Re1 c2 31 Bf4 and Black will have to give up the c-pawn in order just to continue the game for a few moves.

25 Qc2 Qd5 26 Bf2! (Diagram 6)

White has prevented Black from bringing his pieces into play and now regroupes his own forces in the most natural way. Now the knight is heading for g3 and later e4 or f5. The bishop has a less attractive future, and thus simply makes way.

26...b5 27 Ng3 Rf7 28 Re1 b4 29 Qg6!

Black can clearly feel the pressure rising here.

29...Kf8

Or 29...bxc3 30 Nf5 Kf8 31 e6 Rxf5 32 gxf5 Nd6 33 Rb1 and White wins.

30 Ne4!

The knight is heading for e6 via c5.

30...Rxf2

Why not? There is nothing to lose.

31 Kxf2 bxc3 32 Qf5+!

Very exact. Now c5 falls as well.

32...Kg8 33 Qc8+ Kh7 34 Qxc5 Qf7+ 35 Kg1 c2 36 Ng3 Bf8 37 Nf5 Kg8 38 Rc1 1-0

Black is no longer having any fun. A wonderful game by Karpov, in which he showed the absolute depth of his play. No wonder that many players felt tempted to follow in his footsteps and repeat this line. However, eventually a cure for this bad bishop was found.

Game 5

□ Kramnik ■ Kasparov

Linares 1999

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Bc4 c5 8 Ne2 Nc6 9 Be3 0-0 10 0-0 Bg4 11 f3 Na5 12 Bxf7+ Rxf7 13 fxg4 Rxf1+ 14 Kxf1 cxd4 15 cxd4 e5! (Diagram 7)

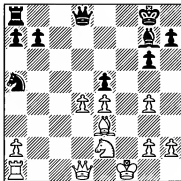


Diagram 7
The new way

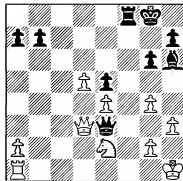


Diagram 8
A trade of queens?

This is what they do now. It's true that this is a dangerous endeavour: Black allows White a passed pawn, guarded by another pawn. But in return he obtains plenty of advantages. First and foremost, he secures some time to speed up counterplay (see the note for White's 17th move). Secondly, he has a clear path of development for the g7-bishop, which can become so terribly passive on its current square.

16 d5

The only try for an advantage. After 16 dxe5 Bxe5 17 Qxd8+ Rxd8 18 Rc1 Nc6 19 g3 Rd3 Black has sufficient counterplay against the shattered white pawns to compensate for the minimal material deficit, Seirawan-Olafsson, Reykjavik 1990.

16...Nc4 17 Qd3

The dynamic difference from the previous game is that after ...e5 Black has a quicker route of development, as can be seen in the following game: 17 Bf2 Qf6! 18 Kg1 Rf8 19 Qe1 Bh6 20 Ng3 Qa6! 21 Kh1 Qa4 22 Qe2 b6 23 h4 Bf4 and Black has managed to activate all his pieces, Georgiev-Ivanchuk, Reggio Emilia 1989. Black eventually went on to win the game, but here the position can be said to be in some form of dynamic balance.

17...Nxe3+

This is by no means forced. Black has a more active alternative in 17...b5!?, the main argument being that the knight on c4 is the best piece on the board. Now there are two games which have given Black good results.

a) 18 Ng1 Bf8! 19 Nf3 Bd6 (the bishop may look passive here, but the enormous strength of the knight on c4 is the main idea, and other pieces will just have to take their place) 20 Bf2 Qa5 21 Kg1 Rc8 22 Ng5 Qd2 and Black has come out of the opening in good shape. Now White contributed towards his own termination, 23 Qxd2 Nxd2 24

Be3 Nc4 25 Bxa7 Ra8 26 Bf2 b4! leading him into great trouble, Tyomkin-Liss, Ramat Aviv 1998.

b) 18 g5 Bf8 19 Ng1 Nxe3+ (now the bishop is exchanged for a reason, and not just because it is possible) 20 Qxe3 Qb6!?. Black is fighting for the dark squares. An important idea is that if Black gets onto White's second rank, he will be able to create a lot of damage. Also, after the exchange of queens, the march of the b5-pawn will prove to be troublesome: 21 Qc3 b4 22 Qc4 Bd6 23 Ke2? a5 24 Nh3 a4 and Black has good counterplay and went on to win in the game Van Wely-Nijboer, Rotterdam 1998.

18 Qxe3 Qh4 19 h3

White has a bad game after 19 Qg3 Rf8+ 20 Kg1 Qxg3 21 Nxg3 Bh6 22 Rf1 Be3+ 23 Kh1 Rc8!.

TIP: Rook and bishop work a lot better together than rook and knight.

Black avoids this exchange, as otherwise he would have no way of attacking the white pawns, which are all on light squares. Now, in combination with the rook, the bishop can assist in attacking the white king, the seventh rank and all the white pawns: 24 h4 Rc2 25 Rf3 Bc5 26 h5 Rxa2 and Black was much better (and eventually won) in Tuchtfeld-Stephan, Germany 1993.

19...Bh6!

Black needs to develop quickly and not waste a moment, otherwise White can arrange his pieces and create some threats of his own. This is what happened in the following game: 19...b6 20 Kg1 Bf8 21 Kh1 Bc5 (the bishop looks good here, but does little, and Black has nothing else going for him) 22 Qd3 Qf6 23 Ng1! (a typical manoeuvre: the knight will be perfectly placed on f3) 23...Qf2 24 Nf3 Bd6 25 Qa6 Rf8 26 Ng5 Qe3 27 Ne6 and Black was much worse in Nenashev-Conquest, Groningen 1997.

20 Qd3 Rf8+ 21 Kg1 Qf2+ 22 Kh1 Qe3!! (Diagram 8)

This move is very deep and shows the understanding the top players have of chess dynamics. In the middlegame Black is not able to create any threats to the white king while the white queen is watching, and all the white pawns are more or less secure. But in the endgame White will miss his greatest defender, the queen, and Black will have sufficient counterplay against the white pawns, as we shall see. Remember that the dynamic advantages of Black's position do not disappear with the exchange of queens, but with the exchange of rooks.

23 Qc4!

This is a more serious winning attempt for White. The endgame holds no perils for Black, as experience shows: 23 Qxe3 Bxe3 24 Rd1 Rf2 25 Ng1 Kf7! (keeping an eye on the d-pawn) 26 Rd3 Bb6 and the game eventually was drawn in Kramnik-Shirov, Cazorla 1998. However, it has been suggested that Black could have improved his play here



with 26...Bd4! 27 Nf3 Rxa2 28 Nxd4 exd4 29 Rxd4 Ke7. One commentator thinks that Black is better, but although he is not worse, there is nothing to sustain this opinion. White, with his active rook, will be able to draw by exchanging some pawns.

23...b5!

Black exchanges his long-term plus of an extra pawn on the queenside for an immediate advantage of invading the white position.

24 Qxb5 Rf2!

Clever play. If Black takes the e-pawn, the white knight will suddenly find an excellent square: 24...Qxe4? 25 Ng3 Qd4 (25...Qf4 26 Qd3 and the knight will find its way) 26 Rb1 Rd8 27 Qe2 Qxd5 28 Ne4, when Black has regained his material but his position is clearly worse. The knight on e4 is very strong and Black's king is in unnecessary danger. Also, the h6-bishop cannot really play an active part, as it will have to take care of its king.

25 Qe8+ Bf8! (Diagram 9)

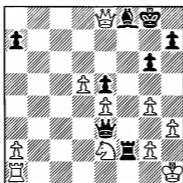


Diagram 9
Home brew

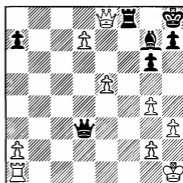


Diagram 10
Black frees his rook

This was a home-prepared improvement over 25...Rf8 26 Qe6+ Kh8 27 g5! and now:

a) 27...Qxg5 was analysed to a draw by Ftacnik, but he did not include moves such as 28 Rb1! in his thoughts.



TIP: When you have nothing better to do, improve the position of your worst placed piece. This will improve your overall position by increasing the coordination between the pieces.

Now the line could continue 28...Rf2 29 Qc8+ Bf8 30 Rg1, when White seems to be a pawn ahead for not very much, even though it is still a struggle.

b) 27...Bxg5 28 Qxe5+ Bf6 29 Qd6 Bg7 30 Ng1 was played in Van Wely-Shirov, Belgrade 1999. White is better here, but possibly even

more crucial would have been 30 Ng3!, preparing 31 Rf1. No matter what, White has the advantage due to his passed d-pawn.

26 Qe6+

The only winning attempt here is 26 d6, hoping that Black follows the analysis published by Kasparov starting with 26...Rxe2 27 d7 Qxe4 28 Rg1 Re3. Now White can improve with 29 Qe6+! Kg7 (29...Kh8 30 Qf6+ Kg8 31 Kh2 and White wins) 30 g5! and White has a winning position, as there is no respectable defence against 31 d8Q. However, simply 26...Qxe2! 27 d7 Qxe4 28 Rg1 Rf3! will draw as in the game.

26...Kh8 27 d6! Qxe2! 28 Qxe5+!

White is trying to win. After 28 d7 Qxe4 29 Rg1 Rf3! he cannot escape the draw: 30 g5 (30 gxf3 Qxf3+ 31 Kh2 Qf2+ 32 Rg2 Qf4+ and Black has perpetual check) 30...Be7!. This is the only move, but it's good enough. Now it is a perpetual after 31 gxf3 Qxf3+ 32 Rg2 Qf1+ 33 Kh2 Qf4+.

28...Bg7

Black gains a tempo for his activities in return for the pawn.

29 Qe8+ Rf8 30 d7! Qd3 31 e5 (Diagram 10)

31 g5!?, avoiding Black's next move, is a possible improvement here.

31...h6!

An excellent move, preparing ...Kh7 to allow Black to include the rook in the counterattack. If instead 31...Kg8? then White has 32 Qe6+! Kh8 (after 32...Rf7 33 Qb3! Black will have to defend a nasty end-game with rook and bishop against queen and pawn after 33...Qxd7 34 e6 Qxe6! 35 Qxe6 Bxa1) 33 Rg1!, just putting the rook on a safe square. Here Black cannot really do anything, as after something like 33...Qd4 there's 34 Qe8! Kg8 35 Rf1! and Black can only resign, while 33...Qb5 34 Qd6! is not a whole lot different.

32 e6

32 Qe7 Kh7 33 e6 Qd5 34 Rg1 Rf3! with a draw is similar to the game.

32...Kh7 33 Rg1?!

Here White could still have made life uncomfortable for Black with the following forced sequence: 33 Qe7! Rf1+ 34 Kh2 Rxa1 35 d8Q Qe3 36 Qxg7+! (the only way to avoid an immediate draw) 36...Kxg7 37 Qe7+ Kg8 38 Qf7+ Kh8 39 Qf6+ Kh7 40 Qxa1 Qxe6 and White has a slight plus with his (doubled) extra pawn.

33...Rf3! 34 Qb8 Rxb3+ ½-½

It's perpetual check.

The Sokolsky Attack (14 d5!?)

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Be4 0-0 8 Ne2 c5 9 Be3 Nc6 10 0-0 Bg4 11 f3 Na5 12 Bd3 cxd4 13 cxd4 Be6 14 d5 (Diagram 11)

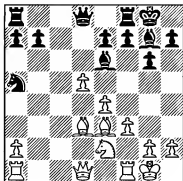


Diagram 11
The Sokolsky Attack

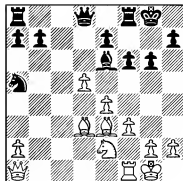


Diagram 12
A weakened kingside

This appears to be a dangerous line for Black at the time of writing; at least if we consider the two games played right before this book was handed in for editing. The exclusive analysis in this book seems to suggest that Black is under a heavy attack, and recent games suggest that the wind is certainly blowing in White's direction. The main idea is that after the continuation 14...Bxa1 15 Qxa1 f6 (Diagram 12), Black has seriously weakened his kingside. He is an exchange ahead, but that will only do him good if he makes it to the endgame. And, as Tarrasch once said, between the opening and the endgame, the Gods have placed the middlegame. There is an important difference between the properties of the middlegame and endgame. In the middlegame, dynamic factors are often much more important than in the endgame. Here we are talking here about things like a kingside attack and the initiative, about which Kasparov gave an important 'rule'.



NOTE: In positions with the attack, the number of pieces attacking is more important than the value of the individual pieces.

This, of course, should be understood with some intelligence. It does not mean that, if the possibility of an attack arises, you should immediately give up your queen for a bishop and knight. Rather that when an attack is in full flow, for a brief moment everything else on the board becomes less relevant because the attack might finish the game at once. Therefore only pieces involved in the attack have a short-term importance. Secondly, it does not matter whether it is a queen or a knight giving checkmate, or if it is supported by a rook or a pawn. Material concerns usually have less importance in positions with mutual attack when compared to the endgame, where domination is the important theme. When applied to the Sokolsky Attack, it means that for some time White will enjoy an initiative and an attack against the

black king, which is positionally explained (justified even) by the absence from the defence of the a8-rook and especially the a5-knight.

All games given here start with **16 Bh6 Re8 17 Kh1**, as this is what grandmasters of the current day choose with great success. There is no reason to believe that Black will not eventually be able to solve his problems, but for now there is a lively theoretical discussion going on around the tournament circuit.

Statistics

In 410 games, White scores 52%. Only 28% of the games have ended in a draw.

Theoretical?

Very much so. As we shall see, a slip or a new move can cost the entire game. When Black involves himself in the Classical Exchange Variation with **10...Bg4**, he needs to be well prepared for this line. Jonathan Rowson wrote that there was no need to memorise the different variations. Well, things have changed and will probably never change back again. A Black player engaged in **10...Bg4** has no choice but to be prepared for this, if he does not wish to start off from a clearly worse position as Luke McShane did in Game 6.

Most lines in the Grünfeld need not be remembered as exactly as those presented here, but as these lines stand out, an extra effort has been made to be up-to-date. Here I recommend **17...Rc8** as the best defence for Black. Analysis suggests that this move should guarantee a draw, but it's not easy to predict the future of this line.

Game 6

□ Nielsen ■ McShane

Malmö 2003

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Bc4 c5 8 Ne2 cxd4 9 cxd4 Nc6 10 Be3 0-0 11 0-0 Bg4 12 f3 Na5 13 Bd3 Be6 14 d5! Bxa1 15 Qxa1 f6 16 Bh6!

This is the modern treatment and what we will focus on here. In the old days people used to play **16 Rb1**, but then Black came up with a famous and flashy refutation starting with **16...Bd7 17 e5 Bc6!!** (Diagram 13), after which White is struggling to find a purpose to his previous play, for example **18 Be4!?** (a better try than **18 exf6? Qxd5 19 fxe7? Rxf3!!** and Black won in Ilic-Krasenkow, Wattens 1990; possibly Lalic's **18 Nc3** is okay, but certainly nothing more) and now:

a) 18...Bxd5? 19 Rd1 e6 20 Nf4 Qe7 21 Nxd5 exd5 22 Bxd5+ Rf7 23 Qc3! Nc6? (after this Black is lost) **24 e6! Rg7 25 Bc5 Qc7 26 e7+ Kh8 27 Bxc6 Qxc6 28 Rd8+ Rg8 29 Rd6!** and Black resigned in Schön-Candea, West Berlin 1987. Necessary was **23...Qxe5! 24 Bxf7+ Kxf7 25 Rd7+ Kg8 26 Bd2**, when White has a strong initiative for the pawn and good winning chances, but the game is still going. Black should at

the right time try to escape into a rook endgame that can be drawn, but it will be hard. There is no apparent reason why White would want to exchange his beautiful bishop for the knight on a5.

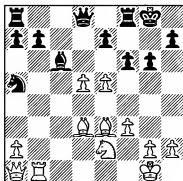


Diagram 13
A flashy refutation

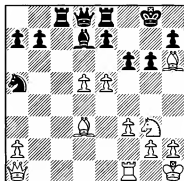


Diagram 14
A strong novelty

b) 18...f5! (this is absolutely essential; otherwise White is justified in his aggression) 19 dxc6 fxe4 20 cxb7 Rb8 21 Qc3 exf3 22 gxf3 e6 and it is hard to find compensation for the sacrificed exchange.

16...Re8

Jonathan Rowson gives the following reason to hold on to the extra exchange: 16...Bd7 17 Bxf8 Qb6+ 18 Qd4! Qxd4 19 Nxd4 Kxf8 20 Rc1 Rc8 21 Rxc8+ Bxc8 22 f4! and Black has a very unpleasant endgame ahead of him.

17 Kh1!

This position is the subject of this game and also the following two. Black has three moves that all share an equally good reputation. Or they did until the moment I wrote this. This game is as current as they come, only five days old at the time of writing. And what a change of evaluation to the line it seems to bring with it!

Black often wants to use the check on b6 to guard f6, while in other lines this also might become a problem for White, so he simply side-steps with his king.

Less dangerous is 17 Rb1. One might wonder what the rook is meant to do on the b-file anyway, especially as White will often advance his e- and f-pawns, thereby creating an open f-file in many lines. One example after 17 Rb1 is 17...a6 (this move is often seen; the main idea is to prevent White from playing Bb5, thereby allowing the e6-bishop to go to f7) 18 Qd4 Bf7 19 Rb6 Rc8 20 Be3 e6 and Black is already a little bit better, Shliperman-Shahade, New York 2000.

17...Bd7

Here Black is trying to eliminate all tricks involving dxe6 before bringing the a8-rook into play. As we shall see, White has a very simple plan that makes his attack crash through. After the game McShane said that he had just played a wrong move order. Well, that can only be decided after looking at the next game.

The more respectable 17...Rc8 and the cautious 17...a6 and are considered in Games 7 and 8.

18 e5 Rc8?

After this Black ends up in deep trouble. Now 19 Nf4 would transpose to Game 8, but the Danish grandmaster has something else in mind. Where will the white knight create the most damage?

Here Black could have created a mess with 18...e6! 19 exf6 Kf7!, which is probably the only way of playing with 17...Bd7.

19 Ng3! (Diagram 14)

A strong innovation. The white knight is heading for e4, from where it will exert devastating pressure on f6. Given the time for it, Fritz 8 will find this move, but initially it will not. Black now has a problem finding a defence.

19...Nc4?!

A mistake, although Black is also worse after the alternatives:

a) One idea is to come to the aid of the light squares with the bishop with 19...Ba4, but White has 20 Qd4! and now:

a1) 20...Bc6?! 21 Qg4! (with the idea of Bxg6 and a mating attack) 21...Kh8 22 exf6 exf6 23 dxc6 and White has a winning material advantage due to the beautiful trick 23...Qxd3 24 Qd7!!, when Black will lose a rook, a queen or be mated.

a2) Black's best try is 20...Bc2 21 d6! (the defence of f6 must be broken). Now Black cannot play 21...Nc6 due to 22 Qc4+, picking up the bishop on c2. So play continues 21...Bxd3 22 Qxd3 Rc6 23 d7 Rf8 24 Bxf8 Kxf8, when White, of course, has a winning advantage. After 25 exf6 Rxf6 26 Ne4 Black is completely busted.

b) Black's best shot seems to be 19...Qc7! 20 exf6 Qc3, blocking the a1-h8 diagonal, but White can play on without queens just as well as with queens: 21 Ne4 Qxa1 (not 21...Qxd3 22 f7+! and mate on g7) 22 Rxa1 Nc4 23 Rb1! (preventing ...Nb2 with tempo) and White continues to have strong compensation, but Black is still in the game.

20 Bxc4 Rxc4 21 Ne4 Qb6

White would also have brought out his remaining piece in the case of 21...Bb5, when the strongest continuation seems to be 22 Rd1!. The idea is that after 22...Kf7 23 d6! Black continues to be very fragile on the dark squares. One notable line is 23...Ba4!? 24 Rd4! Rxd4 25 Qxd4 with a very strong initiative for the exchange, but Black can still struggle.

Instead of 24 Rd4, a lovely trick starts with 24 d7? Bxd7 25 exf6, after which Black can escape with 25...Rxe4 26 fxe4 Bg4!! and the position is not so clear. The main point is, of course, that after 27 Rxd8 Rxd8 28 fxe7 Rd1+ 29 Qxd1 Bxd1 30 Bg5 Bc2 White will never win the endgame.



NOTE: In an opposite-coloured bishops ending, the defender wants all the pawns to stand on the same coloured squares as the bishops, while the aggressor wishes for the opposite.

The idea is that in the current position Black can easily defend his g6-pawn after 31 e5 h5 as there is nothing in the way, and the ending is a draw. Black will put his king on e8 and his pawn on a6, and White will never be able to improve his position.

22 Rd1! Rxe4

Black returns the exchange, but this is far from the end of his troubles. Still, there was no choice. Black can no longer block the diagonal as after 22...Rb4 23 exf6 Rb2 White has many good moves. One is 24 d6! e5 25 Ng5 Rf8 26 Qc1!, when White is on his way in via h6, c4 and maybe even c7 or c8: 26...Rxf6 27 Qc4+ Kh8 28 Nf7+ Kg8 29 Nxe5+ Be6 30 d7! Qd8 31 Qc8 Qxc8 32 dxc8Q+ Bxc8 33 Rd8+ and Black is mated.

23 fxe4 fxe5 24 Qxe5 Qf6 25 Qg3

White has a clear advantage. The black king is weak and the dark squares will continue to be so for the rest of the game. At the same time, White is threatening to play e4-e5-e6, clamping down the king-side and fixing the e7-pawn as a weakness. The opposite-coloured bishops, which in the endgame would be a saving factor, are a problem for Black in the middlegame, as he will never be able to match White's control over the dark squares.

25...e6

A necessity.

26 d6 e5 27 h3 b5 28 Bg5 Qe6 29 Be7 Rc8

29...Qxa2 30 Qxe5 will eventually make it impossible for Black to defend the dark squares around the king as well as keep the pawns under control.

30 Rf1 Qc4 31 Qf2 b4 32 Bg5 Bb5?

The losing mistake. Black could still have held on with 32...Qe6 33 Bh6 Kh8 when White cannot force anything immediately, as after 34 Qf7 Qxf7 35 Rxf7 Rd8 Black is still hanging on. Note that 36 Bg5 Kg8! does not improve the position for White.

33 d7!!

Black was probably surprised by this pawn sacrifice, and he was also running short of time.

33...Bxd7 34 Bh6 Bf5

The only alternative is allowing mate.

35 exf5 Qf7 36 f6 a5 37 Qb6 Ra8 38 Rd1 1-0

Game 7

□ Negyesy ■ Gereben

Budapest 1951

1 d4 Nf6 2 e4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Bc4 c5 8 Ne2 Nc6 9 Be3 0-0 10 0-0 Bg4 11 f3 Na5 12 Bd3 cxd4 13 cxd4 Be6 14 d5 Bxa1 15 Qxa1 f6 16 Bh6 Re8 17 Kh1 a6!?

The idea behind this move is obvious: Black prevents White from winning back the exchange with Bb5 in the case of ...Bf7. And ...Bf7 is a very supportive move, as all Black's problems in this line lie on the kingside. Still, White continues to have a strong attack on the dark squares and sufficient compensation for the exchange.

Black lost a piece after 17...Qd6? 18 Qc3 b6 19 Bf4 Qd8 20 dxe6 in Stocck-Gavrjushin, Pardubice 1997, while Black is worse after 17...Bf7 18 Bb5 Rf8 19 Qd4 Qd6 20 Bxf8 Kxf8 21 Qc3 b6 22 Ba6 Rd8 23 Rc1, Adnan-Abdullah, Abudhabi 2000 – White has a small endgame advantage due to better pieces and control over the light squares.

18 Nf4

White needs to act quickly before Black gets his pieces into place as illustrated by the following two fragments:

a) 18 Qe1 Bf7 19 Qg3 Qd6 20 f4 Rac8 21 h4 Kh8 22 Rf3 Rg8 and Black was in control, Drentchev-Macieja, Rimavska Sobota 1992.

b) 18 f4 Rc8 19 f5 Bf7 20 fxg6 hxg6 21 Nf4 Nc4 22 Nh3 Ne5! and Black is much better, Thiteca-Lavrenov, Belgian League 1997.

18 Ng3 also makes little sense now, as Black can keep an eye on d5 after 18...Bf7!, preventing e4-e5.

18...Bd7?

The idea is understandable but it is slow and a little bit naive. As this game was played 50 years ago, players had a full understanding of neither the initiative nor of this line, so this kind of mistake was more common.

The correct line is also one of the critical lines for the whole variation: 18...Bf7 19 e5! (White is not hesitating) and now:

a) 19...Bxd5? 20 Rd1! would give Black serious problems holding his position together.

b) 19...e6! is often a useful move for Black. By accepting a white pawn on f6, at least he is avoiding a queen or a knight getting to that square, and this gives him better chances of reaching the endgame: 20 dxe6 Bxe6 21 exf6 Bf7! (blockading) 22 Rd1 Qc7 23 Be4! (taking control over the d5-square, aiming to play Nd5-e7+, winning back the exchange and blowing Black's king wide open) 23...Qe5 (23...Rad8? 24 Nd5 Bxd5 25 Bxd5+ Rxd5 26 Rxd5 and White is close to winning) with another split:

b1) 24 Nd5 is the safe option. After 24...Qxa1 (24...Nc6? 25 Ne7+! Rxe7 26 fxe7 Qxa1 27 Rxa1 Nxe7 28 Bxb7 is a winning endgame for White) 25 Rxa1 Nc6 26 Ne7 Rxe4! 27 fxe4 Rd8 Black has good chances of making a draw. The extra pawn does not mean a lot because of the combination of opposite-coloured bishops, the well-placed black pieces and the potential for a passed pawn on the queenside.

b2) 24 Qxe5 Rxe5 25 Rd7 (Diagram 15)

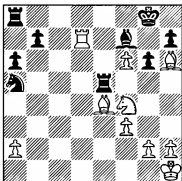


Diagram 15
Good compensation

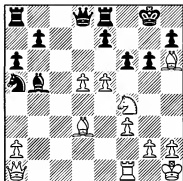


Diagram 16
Time to crash through

and White had good play for the exchange in the game Kobalija-Odeev, Linares 2001. This game probably should have ended in a draw but was won by White. The position is a little harder to play for Black, but he should be okay.

19 e5

Geronimo!

19...Bb5 (Diagram 16) 20 Bxg6!!

TIP: When you are attacking, your pieces have moved to their ideal positions and it is time for action, you should never hesitate.

Black is attacking the f1-rook, which cannot find an easy route to the real scene of action. However, White is attacking with three minor pieces and a queen against no defence in the 3x3 corner in which the unhappy black king is placed.

20...hxg6

Black would also lose after 20...Bxf1 21 Qb1!! Kh8 22 Bxh7 Rg8 23 Ng6+! Kxh7 (23...Rxc6 24 Qxc6 and Black will have to give up his queen to stay in the game) 24 Nf8+ Kxh6 25 Qh7+ Kg5 26 Ne6 mate.

21 Qb1 f5 22 Qe1!

A strange situation has occurred in which Black cannot defend g6 in any sensible way.

22...Qb6



Tougher, but not sufficient, defences would have been presented by more desperate methods:

- a) 22...Bxf1 23 Qg3 Qb6 24 d6 transposes to the game.
- b) 22...Nc4 23 Qg3 Nxe5 24 Nxg6! Ng4 (24...Kh7 25 Nf8+! Kxh6 26 Qh4+ Kg7 27 Ne6+ Kg8 28 Qg5+ and Black will be mated) 25 fxg4 Qd6 (25...f4 26 Qc3 e5 27 dxe6 and mate cannot be avoided) 26 Nxe7+! Qxe7 27 gxf5+ Kh8 28 f6 Qf7 29 Qh4 Kg8 30 Rf3! (all pieces are brought into the attack) 30...Bd3 (a desperate attempt to delay things; 30...Qg6 31 f7+ Qxf7 32 Qg3+! and it is all over) 31 Rxd3 Qg6 32 h3! Re4 33 Bf4 and it's the end. A nice finish is 33...Qh7 34 f7+! Kh8 35 Qh6 and White wins.
- c) 22...e6 23 Qg3 Qc7 24 Qxg6+ Kh8 25 Bg5 Rf8 26 Nxe6 Qh7 27 Bf6+ Rxf6 28 Qxf6+ Kg8 29 Rc1 and White has a winning attack as well as a full army of pawns for the piece. Still, Black has avoided immediate mate.

23 Qg3!

The f1-rook has no relevance to the attack.

23...Bxf1

Black is also lost after 23...Red8 24 Nxg6 – the discovered check will be nasty.

24 d6!

Cutting off the queen and maintaining the three pieces versus one majority on the kingside. All the alternatives were inferior:

- a) 24 Ne6? Kf7! and White has nothing more than perpetual.
- b) 24 Nxg6? Kh7! 25 Nf8+ Kxh6 26 Qh4+ Kg7 27 Qh7+ Kxf8 28 Qh8+ is a great perpetual, but not a full point.
- c) 24 e6? Bxg2+! 25 Kxg2 Qb2+ and Black can defend.

24...Bxg2+ 25 Kxg2 Qb2+ 26 Kh3 Qxe5

Picking up this pawn on the way home means a move lost for Black when compared with 24 e6?. What a difference a tempo makes!

27 Qxg6+ Kh8 28 Qf7?!

Now the game starts getting weird. Here White could have won easily with 28 d7!, as Black has no choice but to lose both rooks: 28...Rec8 (after 28...Rg8 29 Qh5! White has a mating attack) 29 dxc8Q+ Rxc8 30 Ne6! Rg8 31 Qh5 Rg3+ (the only move) 32 hxg3 Qxe6 33 Bd2+ and the knight on a5 is punished for its negligence.

28...Rg8 29 Qh5! ½-½ (?)

Here the game was agreed drawn according to various sources, but the question is whether Black resigned or not. At least I would like to hope that he did.

White has a winning attack after 29...Rg3+ (the only move) 30 hxg3 Qxd6 31 Ng6+ Kg8 32 Bf4 Qd8 33 Nh4!, although a few more moves will still be required to bag the full point.

Game 8

□ Kobalija ■ Zakharstov

St Petersburg 2001

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Bc4 c5 8 Ne2 Nc6 9 Be3 0-0 10 0-0 Bg4 11 f3 Na5 12 Bd3 cxd4 13 cxd4 Be6 14 d5 Bxa1 15 Qxa1 f6 16 Bh6 Re8 17 Kh1 Re8!

This seems to be the solution to Black's problems. Even though he is walking on thin ice, Black seems to have sufficient resources to defend. However, this is only according to the computer, and its understanding of two pawns on the sixth rank versus a rook is probably not perfect.

18 Nf4 Bd7

18...Bf7 again allows 19 Bb5, and White will not stop attacking just because his exchange has been returned to him.

19 e5 Nc4

Black has also tried 19...e6?! 20 dxe6 Bxe6 (Kharlov-Mamedyarov, Batumi 2002), but here White could have obtained played 21 Bb5! Bd7 (21...f5 22 Bxe8 Qxe8 23 Rd1 gives a strong, continuing attack) 22 exf6 Kf7 (otherwise 23 f7+) 23 Rd1 Bxb5 24 Rxd8 Rxd8 25 Nh3! Rc5 26 Qe1! Nc6 27 Ng5+ Rxc5 28 Bxc5 Ba4 29 Bd2 and White wins – Krasenkow.

20 e6 Ba4

Black has also tried to return the piece with 20...Ne5?! 21 exd7 Qxd7 22 Qb1 Nxd3 23 Qxd3 e5 24 Ne2 Qa4 25 Nc3 Qd4 26 Qxd4 cxd4 27 Ne4 Red8 28 Nxf6+ Kf7 29 Ne4 Rxd5 30 Kg1, when the endgame was preferable for White, who eventually won in Nielsen-Turov, Copenhagen 2002.

21 Nxc6! (Diagram 17)

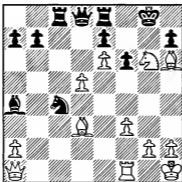


Diagram 17
In for a penny...

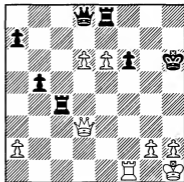


Diagram 18
Mighty pawns

White cannot improve his pieces any further, so it is time for a direct attack on the black king in order to justify his material investments.

21...hxg6 22 Bxg6 Ne5 23 Be4

23 Bf5 Bc2 leads to a transposition after 24 Bxc2, as after 24 f4? Nd3! White has definitely overreached.

Also not working is 23 Qb1 Qxd5 24 f4 Ng4 25 Bf7+ Kh8 26 Bg7+ Kxg7 27 Qg6+ Kh8 28 f5 Qd2 29 Qxg4 (29 Bxe8 Rc1! wins) 29...Qg5 30 Qxa4 Red8 – Black should be able to bag this one.

23...Bc2!

This is the critical and most trustworthy move. Black has also tried 23...Qa5, which seems to be rather slow but possibly still okay for Black. White continues 24 Qd4 and now:

a) 24...Rc4 25 Qf2 Rxe4 26 fxe4 Qc3 27 d6 Qd3 28 dxe7 Qxe4 29 Qxf6 Qg6 30 Qh4 Qg4 31 Rf8+ Kh7 and here, strangely, the database gives 32 Rg8 0-1 Torres-Ramos, correspondence 1990. Instead White probably won after playing the deadly 32 Rf7+!, winning the queen.

b) 24...Bc2 25 Bxc2 Rxc2 26 Qh4 Rc4 27 f4? Kh7? (27...Qa3! was stronger) 28 Qh5! Qb5 29 Bg5+ Kg8 30 fxe5 fxe5 31 Qxg5+ Kh8 32 h3! (typical in these positions – Black cannot free himself and White can use an extra move to prepare the attack) 32...Rc3 33 Qh5+ Kg8 34 Qg6+ Kh8 35 Qh5+ Kg8 36 Rf4 1-0 S.Ernst-Jens, Apeldoorn 2001. Instead of 27 f4, White should have cut off the black defence with 27 Qg3+! Ng4 28 Bf4! Rxf4 29 Qxf4 Ne5 30 Qg3+ Kh7 31 f4 Qb5 32 Rg1 Ng6 33 f5 Ne5, although White will have to be satisfied with perpetual, as he has run out of pieces.

24 Bxc2 Rxc2 25 Qd1 Qc7

Black has also tried 25...Kh7 26 f4! (26 Qxc2+?! Kxh6 27 f4 Ng6 28 Qf5 Rh8 29 g3 Qa5 30 Rd1 Qxa2 and Black won in Bannik-Novotelnov, Tbilisi 1951) 26...Kxh6 27 fxe5 Rc4?! (this is probably just bad; better was 27...Qc7! transposing to the note to Black's 26th move) 28 Qd3 b5 (one piece of private analysis suggests that 28...Rh4 29 d6 Rh5 30 exf6 Qxd6 31 Qxd6 exd6 32 f7 Rf8 33 e7 Rxf7 34 Rxf7 Re5 35 Kg1 Kg6 36 e8Q Rxe8 37 Rxb7 a5 38 Rb5 a4 might give Black chances to draw the rook ending, but only after a lot of torture) 29 exf6 exf6 30 d6 (Diagram 18).

TIP: Two pawns on the sixth rank often beat a rook in the endgame.



Here the pawns compensate fully for the rook. They are just as dangerous to the king as a minor piece would be (and they also might promote!): 30...Kg7? (Black should consider pulling the emergency cord to reach an endgame with 30...Rxe6! 31 Qh3+ Kg7 32 Qxe6 Rd4, when something like 33 d7 a5 34 Qf5 Rxd7 35 Qxb5 Rd1 might give reasonable chances of a draw) 31 Qg3+ Kh7 (31...Kf8 32 e7+ Rxe7 33 dxe7+ Qxe7 34 Qg5 does not force the exchange of rooks, leaves Black a pawn down and the king still in trouble, so it cannot be recommended) 32 Qh3+ Kg7 33 Qg3+ Kh7 34 Qf3! (this is really neat –

Black is busted) 34...Kg6 (there are no alternatives: 34...Kg7 35 Qb7+ Kh6 36 Qf7 f5 37 d7 Rh8 38 h3 and the black king is high and dry; 34...Rc5 35 Qb7+ Kh8 36 Qf7! gives Black little chance to defend; 34...Kh6 35 Qd5 f5 36 Qxf5 Rf8 37 Qh3+ Kg7 38 Qg3+ Kh7 39 Re1 Rf4 40 Qd3+ and White wins) 35 Qd5 Rh8 (35...Kh6 36 h3!) 36 h3 a6 37 Qd3+ Kg7 38 Qg3+ Kh7 39 Rf5 Qe8 40 Rxf6 Rg8 41 Qd3+ Kg7 42 Qf5 Rc5 43 Rf7+ 1-0 C.Hansen-McShane, Copenhagen 2003.

Bad is 25...Rc5? 26 f4 Qxd5 (or 26...Rxd5 27 Qh5! Kh7 28 fxe5 Rxe5 29 Bg5+! Kg7 30 Qh6+ Kg8 31 Qg6+ Kh8 32 Bd2! with the threat of Rf3-h3; White wins after the beautiful 32...Qc8 33 Bc3!!, continuing to control both the e5-rook and the queen on c8) 27 Qh5 Rc2 28 Rg1 and Black did not have any defence, Van Wely-Kovchan, Moscow 2003.

26 f4 Rc1!?

Kobalija (at least I think it is him) gives the following line (though slightly elaborated here) as leading to a draw, and possibly he is right. Black plays 26...Kh7! and now White has the following possibilities:

a) 27 Bg5 fxe5 28 Qh5+ Kg7 29 Qxe5+ Ng6 30 f5 Rf8 31 Qxe6+ Kh8 and White only has a perpetual.

b) White can also go wrong with 27 Qh5? Rc1 28 Bg5+ Kg7 29 Bh6+ Kg8!! 30 Qxe8+ Kh7 and Black wins.

c) 27 fxe5 Kxh6 28 exf6 (28 d6 Qc6 29 Qg4 fxe5 30 Qh3+ Kg6 is a draw) 28...Qc4! (White would win after 28...exf6 29 Qd4! Rf8 30 d6 Qc6 31 Qh4+ Kg7 32 Qg3+ Kh7 33 e7) with a further split:

c1) 29 d6?! Qe4 30 Qxc2? (30 Qf3 Qxf3 31 gxf3 Kg5 32 fxe7 Rd2 is better, but Black is still doing fine after 33 Rg1+ Kf4 34 d7 Rxe7 35 Rg8 Rxe6 36 d8Q Rxd8 37 Rxd8 Kxf3; White must fight to draw, though it is certainly possible) 30...Qxc2 31 f7 Qc4! 32 Rg1 (Diagram 19)

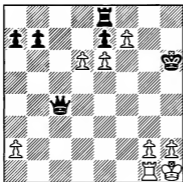


Diagram 19
Black to play and win

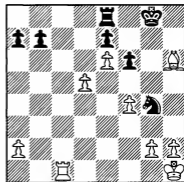


Diagram 20
The bishop is loose

32...Rh8!! (the only winning move) 33 dxe7 Kg7 and now the pawns don't make it to the end: 34 e8Q Rxh2+! 35 Kxh2 Qh4 mate.

c2) 29 f7 Rf8 30 d6 exd6 31 Re1!? (trying, unsuccessfully, to avoid a draw; Kobalija's line goes 31 e7 Rxf7 32 Qxd6+ Kh7 33 Rxf7+ Qxf7 34 Qd3+ Kg7 35 Qd4+ Kh7 [35...Qf6 36 e8N+] 36 Qd3+ with a draw) 31...Rf2! 32 h3 d5 33 Kg1 Qc5! 34 Kh1 Qc4! with a repetition.

27 Qxc1 Qxc1 28 Rxc1 Ng4 (Diagram 20) 29 h3!

A brilliant concept. The black knight is trapped on h6, and White has two pawns and a strong rook as compensation.

29...Nxb6 30 g4 Rd8

30...b5 31 Rc7 a5 seems like a better defence. A draw is a likely outcome, but not without Black suffering.

31 Rc7 Kf8 32 Rd7! Nf7

32...Rxd7 33 exd7 Nf7 might look tempting, but White will have a much easier time activating his own king and will soon have a winning endgame.

33 Kg2 b5 34 Kf2 Ke8?

This is bad. Black needed to rescue the a-pawn with 34...a5.

35 Rxa7 Nd6 36 h4 Kf8 37 h5 f5

Zakharstov gives 37...Rc8 38 h6! Rc2+ 39 Ke3 Rh2 40 Ra8+ Ne8 41 g5 Rh5 42 g6 Rxh6 43 g7+ Kxg7 44 Rxe8 and White wins.

38 g5 Ne4+ 39 Ke3 Rxd5 40 Ra8+ Kg7 41 h6+ Kh7 42 Re8! Nxe5 43 fxg5 Re5+ 44 Kf4 Rxe6 45 Rf8 1-0

The Pawn Sacrifice with 14 Rc1

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Bc4 0-0 8 Ne2 c5 9 Be3 Nc6 10 0-0 Bg4 11 f3 Na5 12 Bd3 cxd4 13 cxd4 Be6 14 Rc1 (Diagram 21)

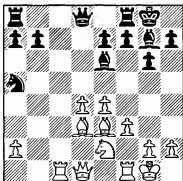


Diagram 21
White offers a pawn

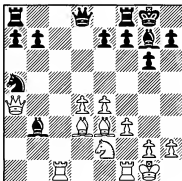


Diagram 22
The fashion

This pawn sacrifice brings us to one of the central themes of the Grünfeld Defence: the far advanced, passed d-pawn versus two queenside pawns in their initial position. This line has for a long time been something worth playing but not offering an advantage as such. Players like Artur Yusupov, Vladimir Kramnik and Tiger Hillarp-Persson have enjoyed the position with White and repeated it in several games assisted by small improvements or simple innovations, just to avoid playing the same game once again. These days the popularity of this line has declined somewhat. It is still played by those who like the position, but no one will ever claim that White is better.

In Game 9, after 14...Bxa2 15 Qa4 Black replies with the old fashioned 15...Be6. The real fashion in this line is seen in Game 10, where Black plays 15...Bb3! (Diagram 22).

This is Anand's innovation, which seems to give White more problems than was originally thought. It's strange that Yusupov wrote in his notes to Game 9 that 15...Bb3 deserved a '?!', but he was quickly worse in his 1994 game with Anand, who was the first to try this move at a high level. These days 15...Bb3 is the recommended standard and also the most successful statistically.

Statistics

In 473 games White has a score of 57%, while 38% of the games are drawn. A reasonable score for White, but not that much over the average of 55%. In the 56 games with 15...Bb3!? White's score lowers to 50%, while 34% of the games end in a draw.

Theoretical?

Not so much. It seems that although the game is very sharp and double-edged, a clear understanding of how the pieces should be placed is more important. You need to know a few moves, of course, but that is all.

Game 9

□ Yusupov ■ Kasparov

USSR 1988

This game is a clash between a strategic player with a love of slight advantages, and one of the most dynamically oriented players ever to have climbed to the chess throne. It was also played and analysed before Fritz became a name on everybody's lips, so there were inevitably some mistakes in the original analysis by Yusupov, which, however, still remains on a very high level. The game fully illustrates the tactical nature of the Grünfeld, and also how these tactics often serve positional purposes more than a direct attack on the king.

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Bc4 c5 8 Ne2 Nc6 9 Be3 0-0 10 0-0 Bg4 11 f3 Na5 12 Bd3 cxd4 13 cxd4 Be6 14 Rc1 Bxa2 15 Qa4 Be6 16 d5 Bd7 17 Qb4

17 Qa3 has also been played a few times but has never gained real support. It is hard to see why the queen should be better placed on a3 than on b4. There are little advantages, but the disadvantage of not controlling the b5-square seems to be clear.

17...e6

17...b6 has also been played here but has gone completely out of favour and replaced by the text move, again for a good reason. Black needs to develop and gain some kind of activity, as it will take a 100 years and a 1000 moves before his extra pawn on the queenside will bring him any happiness.

18 Rfd1

Here White has many different options:

a) 18 d6 Nc6 19 Qxb7 Rb8 20 Qc7 Rb3! has been played a few times (Razuvaev-Lputian, Sochi 1987 was the first) and gives Black good counterplay.

b) By far the most popular move is 18 Nc3 exd5 19 Nxd5 (less popular is 19 exd5 Re8 20 Bf2 Bf8 21 Qb2 [21 Qf4?! g5 22 Qg3 Nb3 23 Rb1 Nc5 24 Bc2 f5! and Black completely takes over the initiative – Beliavsky] 21...Bg7 22 Qb4 Bf8 23 Qb2 and the position is dynamically balanced, Beliavsky-Kasparov, USSR 1988) 19...Be6 (Black cannot allow such a knight to threaten him) 20 Rfd1 Bxd5 21 exd5 Re8 22 Bf2! (22 Bf4 Be5! gives Black good chances to create a blockade on the dark squares) (**Diagram 23**)

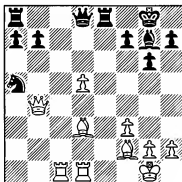


Diagram 23
A typical position

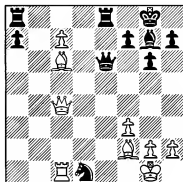


Diagram 24
What did Yusupov miss?

This is the main line. White, with his two bishops and passed pawn, has compensation for the pawn. Whether it is enough to prove an advantage is very doubtful, but Black players keen to avoid this position

have investigated 15...Bb3. This kind of position is archetypal for the Exchange Variation of the Grünfeld: White sacrifices his a-pawn for space, a passed pawn in the centre and some time (this is also the case with 7 Nf3 and 8 Rb1 – see Chapter 3).

18...exd5 19 exd5 Re8

The improved positioning of this rook is the main gain for Black from 17...e6.

20 Bf2 b5!

This move is a good illustration of the position's dynamic nature. Black has space problems and his extra pawn will only count after the middlegame, which is only just starting. Kasparov and Yusupov give the following two lines as an illustration of how difficult the position can be for Black:

- a) 20...Bf5 21 Bxf5 Rxe2 22 Be4 Rb2 23 Qe1 followed by d5-d6, when Black is under pressure.
- b) 20...b6 21 Ba6 Bc8 22 Bb5 Bd7 23 Nd4! gives White good compensation on the light squares.

21 Nd4 Nc4!

This was the idea of ...b5. The extra pawn has little practical value, so Black offers to return it in exchange for getting his offside knight back into the game.

22 Nc6

Now it all becomes terribly complicated. 22 Nxb5?! Nb2! is not what White is looking for, while the position would also be fine for Black after 22 Bxc4 a5! 23 Qc5 bxc4 24 Qxc4 a4 25 Nc6 Qf6, when the presence of Black's distant passed pawn is suddenly felt.

22...Bxc6 23 dxc6

23 Bxc4? Bd7! would have allowed Black to get rid of his knight while keeping his extra pawn and a safe blockade of the d-pawn.

23...Nb2! 24 Bxb5!

White also needs to be careful. 24 c7?? Qxd3!! is a funny tactical twist.

24...Nxd1 25 c7 Qd5!?

Kasparov is an aggressive player who always chooses the most active of two possibilities. Black would also have been able to draw after 25...Qc8 26 Bxe8 Nxf2 27 Bxf7+!? (27 Qe7 and 27 Bd7 are simple draws) 27...Kxf7 28 Kxf2 with compensation for the piece. The main idea is Qe4xa8, winning the exchange. Therefore Black probably should play 28...Qa6! 29 Qb3+ Ke7 30 Qb8. Instead of giving a perpetual himself, White can let Black do it: 30...Bd4+ 31 Ke1 Qa5+ 32 Kd1 Qa4+ with a draw.

26 Bxe8!

Clearly the safest decision. White would have to play more exactly after 26 Bc6?! Qe6! (also difficult to calculate is 26...Qd3 27 Bxe8! [27 Bxa8? Qe2! and Black wins] 27...Nxf2 28 Bxf7+! Kxf7 29 Qb7! [29

Qf4+? Qf5!] 29...Rc8!? [29...Nh3+ 30 Kh1 Nf2+ is a direct draw] 30 Qxc8 Qd4 31 g3! Nd3+! 32 Kh1 Nxc1 33 Qd8 Qf2 and White has nothing better than perpetual check) and now:

a) 27 Qc4?? (Diagram 24) is a draw according to Yusupov, but Black has the brilliant winning tactic 27...Bd4!!.

b) 27 Bxe8! Nxf2 28 Qc4! (28 Qb8? Qe3! and Black wins; 28 Bxf7+ Kxf7 29 c8Q Rxc8 30 Qb7+ Kf6 31 Qxc8 Qxc8 32 Rxc8 Nd3 33 Rc7! draws according to Yusupov, but Black has the riposte 33...Bf8! followed by ...Bc5 – it is unlikely this is what Artur had in mind) 28...Nh3+ 29 Kf1 Qxc4+ 30 Rxc4 Rxe8 31 c8Q with a drawn endgame. 26...Nxf2 27 c8Q

The endgame after 27 Qc4 Nh3+ 28 Kf1 Qxc4+ 29 Rxc4 Rxe8 30 c8R Rxc8 31 Rxc8+ Bf8 32 gxh3 Kg7 is drawn, as I've already stated a few times. The reason is simple: White will not be able to create a serious threat on the black position, even though I am sure that Yusupov would still have loved to test Black for a few moves in this kind of position. Why he did not, I find hard to understand.

27...Rxc8 28 Rxc8 Nh3+!

All other moves lose.

29 gxh3

29 Kf1?? would be a terrible blunder due to 29...Qd3+ 30 Ke1 Qe3+ 31 Kd1 Nf2+ 32 Kc2 Qd3+ 33 Kc1 Qd1 mate.

29...Qd1+

Now Black has a perpetual check.

30 Kg2 Qe2+ 31 Kg1 ½-½

Game 10

□ Hillarp Persson ■ Sutovsky

York 1999

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Bc4 c5 8 Ne2 Nc6 9 Be3 0-0 10 0-0 Bg4 11 f3 Na5 12 Bd3 cxd4 13 cxd4 Be6 14 Rc1 Bxa2 15 Qa4 Bb3!

Here it is: the most annoying move for White. Earlier it was assumed that the bishop was in danger on b3. Later, however, it became clear that the bishop is more annoying here than it is in trouble.

16 Qb4 b6 17 Rc3! (Diagram 25)

In the first game in this line White tried to trap the bishop, but had little success: Yusupov-Anand, 2nd match game, Wijk aan Zee 1994 continued 17 d5 and now 17...Qd6!. This is the main idea for Black. The bishop is in trouble because the white queen dominates it. So the queen is exchanged and Black will not have serious problems with his bishop any more, but White will still continue to find it annoying. Now 18 Bd2?! was a serious error. The bishop has little hope of doing anything good from the b4-square. Better is 18 Qxd6 exd6 19 Rc7 with sufficient compensation, but no more, Peckford-Wolff, North Bay

1996. After 18 Bd2 Anand continued with 18...Rfd8!. This is probably the result of good preparation at home. The main idea is that Black has not yet given up on the hope of playing ...e6, and now prepares to take over the d-file, secretly aiming at the unprotected piece on d3. Play continued 19 Qxd6, in order to keep the d-file closed, but without great success. Following 19...exd6 20 Bg5 Rdc8 21 Ba6 Rc5! Black was better. Instead of 19 Qxd6, 19 Ba6 has been mentioned: 19...Qxb4 20 Bxb4 e6! 21 Be7 Rd7 22 d6 Be5 23 Bb5 Bxd6! 24 Bxd7 Bxe7 and Black has a clear advantage. The two distant passed pawns accompanied by the two bishops for the exchange is a good trade. All the middlegame aspects are gone: the d-pawn, the initiative and the queens. All that remains are the long-term Black advantages.

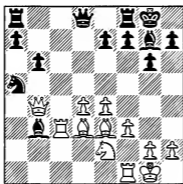


Diagram 25
Attacking the bishop

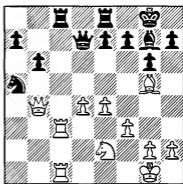


Diagram 26
Preparing for the endgame

The most popular move these days is 17 Bg5! f6 18 Bh4!. The idea behind this move is to prevent ...e7-e5, which is possible after 18 Bf4. After 18 Bh4 we look at two moves:

- a) The idea behind 18...Bf7!? is for this bishop to be on the other side of the d-pawn when white plays d4-d5, and Black is still able to play ...Qd6. White can avoid this with 19 Bg3! e5 20 Ba6!, Mikhailevski-Liss, Ramat Aviv 1998. White has good compensation for the pawn. The light squares in the black camp are seriously weakened, the black rooks have problems getting into the game, the knight is stranded on a5 and the g7-bishop doesn't look too hot either. Still, White is also not perfectly coordinated, so there is still plenty of play in the position, even though White is probably better.
- b) 18...Qd6 19 Qxd6 exd6 20 d5!. The idea of 17 Bg5! now becomes apparent. White wants to put his knight on e6 and thereby secure himself positional compensation. Black players apparently do not fear this, as they continue to stick to 15...Bb3, which is probably the most reliable evaluation that can be given: strong players en masse think that Black is OK!. The move 20...f5? was played by Shirov in his game

against Kramnik in Cazorla 1998, where he was soon worse. Later it was suggested that Black should have played 20...Rac8 21 Ba6 Rc5 with a tenable game – this is probably a reasonable evaluation. Note that 22 Bf2 gives a fascinating endgame after 22...Bc4!? 23 Bxc5 Bxa6 24 Bxd6 Bxe2 25 Rf2 Bb5 26 Bxf8 Bxf8, when in my mind the minor pieces equal the rooks, but a serious test is probably needed to answer this question satisfactorily.

17...Be6

Who has benefited from the slightly different positioning of the pieces? Black has played ...b6, but White has gained a tempo getting his rook to c3. At first the answer appears to be Black. White's advantages in this position are not primarily connected to the control over the open file, but to the prospects of gaining space in the centre, cramping the black pieces, and possibly also creating a passed pawn on the d-file. Right now, the unfortunate position of the rook on c3 prevents White from playing d4-d5. Or does it?

18 Bg5?

I honestly do not like this move at all. Black has no problems defending the e7-pawn and, as we shall see below, he can even abandon it in favour of forcing an endgame where his queenside majority often plays an important role. Instead White should be more aggressive and try to keep the initiative. This can be achieved with either:

a) 18 Nf4! Bd7?! (18...Qd6!?) was played in Barkhagen-Åkesson, Stockholm 1998, and here 19 Nd5! e6 20 Ne7+ Kh8 21 e5 would grant White the initiative. The main idea is to win material with 22 Bg5 and 23 Nxe6+, but also in general to control the c-file and bring a rook to c7. Black should avoid 21...Re8?, when White can continue with the strong 22 Be4!, winning the exchange, or 22 Bg5. Black should therefore defend against 22 Bg5 with 21...h6!, after which the position is probably balanced in some way, but very hard to evaluate. I would not be surprised if this was tested in a game somewhere in the near future.

b) I personally like the move 18 d5! very much. Black should now respond with 18...Bc8 19 Bd4 Qd6! with a decent position. He should not be blinded by the possibility of material gain after 18...Bxc3 19 Qxc3. Following 19...Rc8 20 Qb2 f6 21 Ba6! White regains the exchange, when the opposite-coloured bishops and especially the inefficiency of the e6-bishop guarantee him an advantage. Instead of 19...Rc8, stronger is 19...Bd7! 20 Bh6 f6 21 Bxf8 Qxf8 22 Nd4 with good play for the pawn.

18...Re8! 19 Bb5

19 Rfc1 Qd6! does not achieve anything for White. Black can also go for a long forcing line starting with 19...Rc8, which apparently leaves White with a very promising advantage after 20 Rxc8 Bxc8 21 Bxe7 Rxe7 22 Rxc8 Qxc8 23 Qxe7. However, it is in fact only a draw be-

cause after 23...Nc6 24 Qd6 Nxd4 25 Nxd4 Qc1+ 26 Kf2 Bxd4+ 27 Qxd4 Qd2+ Black has a very nice perpetual check.

19...Bd7 20 Bxd7!

White is forced to go for this exchange, as he would find his queen badly placed after 20 Ba6? Nc6 21 Qc4 b5! 22 Qc5 (22 Bxb5 Na5 23 Qd5 Bxb5 24 Qxb5 Bxd4+ and Black wins the exchange) 22...Qb6! 23 Qxb6 axb6 24 Bb7 Nxd4!, when Black had a completely winning position, Timman-Hellers, Malmö 1997.

20...Qxd7 21 Rfc1 Rac8! (Diagram 26)

I like this move very much. Black is ready to go for an endgame that should be better for him, as the passed pawns on the queenside are more difficult to control than those in the centre.



NOTE: In the endgame, passed pawns far away from the kings are usually stronger than those close to the kings.

21...Qd6!? was also a reasonable move, but White still has a lot of good play in the middlegame.

22 Rxc8 Rxc8 23 Rxc8+ Qxc8 24 Qxe7

Black would quickly win after 24 Bxe7? Qc2 25 Qd6 Nc6!, when White loses at least a pawn.

24...h6 25 Bf4!

Tiger is a very talented player and a fantastic fighter. Here he stays clear of some of the dangers in the position:

a) 25 Bf6?! Nc6 26 Qd6 Qe6! would land White in a very dangerous endgame. After 27 Qxe6 fxe6 28 Bxg7 Kxg7 White will try to get his king to the queenside as soon as possible in order to control the passed pawns. Black, on the other hand, will try to gain further advantages in the centre and on the kingside before committing his queenside pawns too much. I believe that White should be able to draw this endgame, but it is a very risky business.

b) 25 Be3!? is perfectly possible. Here Black has two lines he can investigate:

b1) 25...Qc2 26 Kf2! Nc4 27 Qe8+ has been given as winning for White, but this is simply not true – it's a draw. After 27...Kh7 28 Qxf7 Black can attack the white king in only one way with 28...Nb2!. Following 29 Bf4 Nd3+ 30 Ke3, when it looks like all the fun is over, Black can play 30...Nb2!, establishing the deadly ...Nd1+ as a threat. Here White has nothing better than to repeat with 31 Kf2!.

b2) 25...Nc4! (I prefer this move) 26 Bf4 a5, when Black's pawns do appear to be more dangerous, and White's king remains unprotected.

25...Qc2 26 Kf1 g5?

Here Black could have reached a very double-edged endgame with 26...Qd1+ 27 Kf2 Bxd4+!? 28 Nxd4 Qxd4+ 29 Kg3 Nc4! 30 Bxh6 Qd6+ 31 Qxd6 Nxd6, when his main trump is the distant passed pawns. But White also has something going for him in this position – a

bishop is often better than the knight in endgames with pawns on both wings. Still, it is Black who has all the chances.

27 Qe8+ Kh7 28 Bg3?! (Diagram 27)

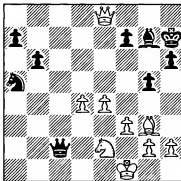


Diagram 27
A misplaced bishop

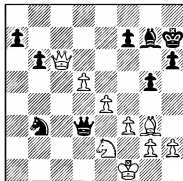


Diagram 28
Black closes in

Now Black gets a chance to create threats against White's king.

Necessary was 28 Be5!. Black cannot exchange bishops due to the openness of his king, so the game would continue 28...f6 29 Bg3 Nc4!, when Black has enough counterplay for a draw, but hardly more.

White should continue with 30 Qd7, when there are many perpetual checks for both players.

28...Qc4! 29 d5 Nb3!

Bringing in the cavalry. All other moves are just bad.



TIP: Whenever you have the chance, you should bring this knight back into the game. Your control in the centre will be lessened if you don't.

30 Qc6?

After this mistake Black has a winning attack. White could have still put up stiff resistance with 30 Ke1!. Black can try 30...Nc1 31 Nxc1 Qxc1+ 32 Ke2 Qc2+ 33 Ke3 f5! 34 exf5 Qc5+ 35 Ke2, but no win is apparent. After 35...Qxd5 36 Qg6+ Kh8 37 Qe8+ Qg8? there is a very strong reply in 38 Qe6!, when suddenly the initiative is with White.

30...Qd3! (Diagram 28)

Did White forget about this move somehow? Now it is all over.

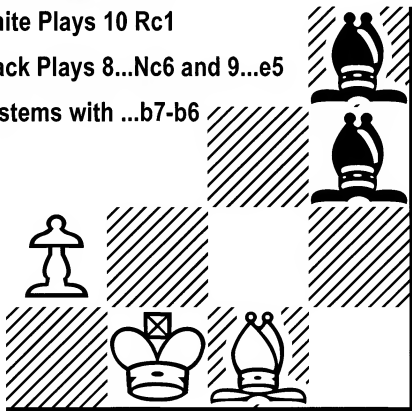
31 Bf2

White is mated after 31 Kf2 Nd4! 32 Nxd4 Bxd4+ 33 Ke1 Bc3+ 34 Kf2 Qd2+ 35 Kf1 Qd1+ 36 Kf2 Qe1.

31...Qd1+ 32 Be1 Nc5! 33 Qc8 Nd3 34 Qf5+ Kg8 35 Qc8+ Bf8 36 Qc3 Bb4 37 Qc8+ Kg7 0-1

Classical Exchange: Minor Lines

- Introduction
- Black Plays 10...Bd7
- Black Plays 10...Qc7
- White Plays 10 Rc1
- Black Plays 8...Nc6 and 9...e5
- Systems with ...b7-b6



Introduction

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Bc4 0-0 8 Ne2

In the Classical Exchange there are of course ways for Black to develop his pieces other than ...Bg4 and ...Na5. Over time this has established itself as the main configuration, but certainly there are other choices. In this Chapter we will have a look at the most relevant of these.

10...Qc7 and the modern 10...Bd7 are alternatives to 10...Bg4. Also there is 8...Nc6 with the idea of ...e5 instead of ...c5, which is certainly a playable alternative to the main lines.

We shall also see what Black should do if White tries Polugaevsky's tricky 10 Rc1 (instead of 10 0-0). The main idea for White is to push the h-pawn and attack Black's king, but the move also has many positional ideas. But do not be frightened – a solution has been found.

Finally we shall take a look at systems in which Black employs ...b7-b6, either at move eight or move nine.

Black Plays 10...Bd7

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Bc4 0-0 8 Ne2 c5 9 Be3 Nc6 10 0-0 Bd7 (Diagram 1)

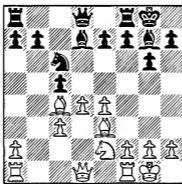


Diagram 1
Black plays 10...Bd7

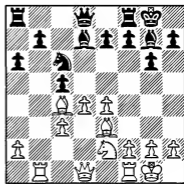


Diagram 2
The Svidler way

This is obviously a less forcing line than 10...Bg4. In an age of computer analysis, many professionals have started playing this kind of system, where computer analysis has less influence and where the basic soundness of the position is rated quite high.

The idea of 10...Bd7 is simply to play where Black is strongest: on the queenside. This plan has become so popular that recently it was

played by one of the strongest players in the world for the past 15 years, Vassily Ivanchuk. Also, Peter Svidler, a very strong grandmaster, has an affection for 10...Bd7.

Statistics

In 111 games White scores 43%, winning 31 games and losing 46. However, it should be said that on average the Black players were rated 50 Elo points higher than their adversaries. Still, this is a good score for Black that shouldn't be ignored.

Theoretical?

No. You may wish to study a few extra games to get some picture as to where the pieces go, but in general the main idea of 10...Bd7 is to play without knowing the theory. White was very well prepared in the game below, but this tells us more about the playing level than about the properties of the opening.

Game 11

□ Nielsen ■ Ivanchuk

Copenhagen 2003

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Bc4 c5 8 Ne2 Nc6 9 Be3 0-0 10 0-0 Bd7

French GM Kouatly plays 10...Bg4 11 f3 Bd7, with the idea that the bishop on e3 is now unprotected. This gives both pluses and minuses which are hard to evaluate. Probably the pawn is better left on f2, as the move f2-f3 does give White some flexibility.

Another idea is 10...e6!?. This move has only been played by Davies, and not yet against any strong players, but maybe it is worth a try.

11 Rb1 a6!? (Diagram 2)

This is how Svidler, Sokolov and others play it. 11...Na5 12 Bd3 Rc8 13 Qd2 e5! (Van der Werf-Nijboer, Leeuwarden 2001) is also interesting.

12 dxc5

Now White accepts the pawn due to the move 11...a6. True, White's pawn structure is wrecked, but Black will have problems undermining it.

12...Na5 13 Bd3 Qc7 14 f4!

This was a new move that Nielsen had prepared for this game. The main idea is to play e4-e5 to 'turn off' the black bishop on g7. Black now plays the most natural-looking move in the position.

14...Rfd8

Emil Sutovsky wondered if Ivanchuk had actually blundered here. Blundering in his context probably does not mean overlooking White's next move, but 17 Rf2! in the note to Black's 16th move. But another

question also arises. What else should Black have played? Playing the rook to the open file seems the most logical.

15 c6! (Diagram 3)

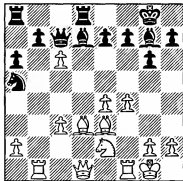


Diagram 3
Eyeing the b6-square

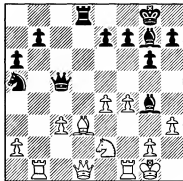


Diagram 4
Good play for the exchange?

The main idea is, of course, Be3-b6.

15...Qxc6 16 Bb6 Bg4!

Played after a long think. 16...Rdc8? contains the idea 17 Bxa5 Qc5+, winning back the knight. But White can win a piece by 17 Rf2! Bxc3 (the knight had nowhere to go) 18 Nxc3 Qxc3 19 Bf1 Be8 20 Rf3 Qc6 21 Rb4! and the knight is trapped.

17 Bxd8 Rxd8

After the game Peter Heine Nielsen opined that Black could have improved by first playing 17...Qc5+!. The reason is that White cannot yet, for obvious reasons, play his king to h2, and in some lines this can make an important difference.

18 h3

18 Qc2 was an interesting choice, against which Black should continue with 18...Nc4.

18...Qc5+ (Diagram 4) 19 Kh2

Or 19 Rf2!? Qe3! 20 hxg4 Rxd3 21 Qa4!? (21 Qe1 Qxe4 22 Rd1 Nc4 23 Rxd3 Qxd3 24 Rf3 and White keeps the balance) 21...Nc6 22 g5 (we reach a surreal endgame after 22 e5 Rd2 23 Re1 g5 24 g3 Rxe2!? 25 Rxe2 Qxg3+ 26 Kf1 Qh3+ 27 Rg2 Qxc3 28 Qc2 Qxc2 29 Rxc2 gxf4; White is two exchanges up but is running out of pawns) 22...Rd2 23 Qc4 Na5 24 Qc8+ Bf8 25 Re1 Qxe4 and Black has good counterplay. 19...Nc4?!

In hindsight Black would have been better off with 19...Qh5! 20 Rf2 Qc5!, heading for a repetition or, after 21 Kg1 Qe3, the note above. Af-

ter 21 Qe1 Bxh3! 22 Nd4 Bc8 Black has sufficient counterplay for the exchange.

20 hxg4 Ne3 21 Qd2 Nc4 22 Qd1

White decides to trust his distinguished opponent and go for the draw. Instead 22 Qe1!? Rxd3 23 Rxb7! Ne3 24 Rb8+ Bf8 25 Rf3 Nxc4+ 26 Kg3 Rxf3+ 27 gxf3 Ne3 28 Nd4 would have left White much better. Maybe Black can improve on this somewhere, but he should at least have been given the chance to do so.

22...Ne3 23 Qd2 Nc4 24 Qd1 ½-½

Black Plays 10...Qc7

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Bc4 0-0 8 Ne2 c5 9 Be3 Nc6 10 0-0 Qc7

According to Smyslov in his classic book *Smyslov's 125 Selected Games* (where you can get a first rate view of how a truly intuitive player thinks), it was he who invented this variation. However, 10...Qc7 had actually been played back in 1939 by Levenfish in at least one game, and a few times since then. When Smyslov introduced it in 1959 against Gligoric, he undoubtedly brought some new ideas and probably had no knowledge of the few previously played games with 10...Qc7.

These days 10...Qc7, with the idea of 11...Rd8 and pressure on d4, is no longer in favour with the top players. The problem is that the queen has not found a safe spot on c7 and will be disturbed with Be3-f4 almost immediately. The game below is a good illustration of Black's problems.

Statistics

White has scored 56% over 1000 games, winning 39% of the games, drawing 34% and losing 27%. Pretty average.

Theoretical?

This line is probably better than its reputation and it has the great plus of being less forcing than 10...Bg4.

Game 12

□ Yusupov ■ Kamsky

Tilburg 1992

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Bc4 c5 8 Ne2 Nc6 9 Be3 0-0 10 0-0 Qc7 11 Rc1!

The x-ray effect on the queen is a good reason for developing the rook here.

11...Rd8

The idea behind Black's previous move.

12 Bf4!

This illustrates the downside of Black's strategy. The queen now has to find a new square, as 12...e5 13 Bg5 Rd6 14 Bd5! is very annoying for Black. According to *ECO*, White has three major alternatives here: 12 Qd2, 12 f4 and 12 Qa4, but none of them gives Black problems in the same way as 12 Bf4.

12...Qd7

This is the standard move. 12...Qa5?! 13 Qb3! e6 14 d5 has been seen in a few games, all ending in disaster for Black.

13 d5

White needs to react to the threats to his centre. 13 Qb3?! is less effective now: 13...e6 14 d5? Na5 15 dxe6 (or 15 Qb5 Nxc4 followed by ...exd5) 15...Nxb3 16 exd7 Nxc1 17 dxc8Q Nxe2+ 18 Bxe2 Raxc8 and Black wins with his extra exchange.

13...Na5

According to the *ECO*, Black should be able to equalise with 13...Ne5!?, but this is down to bad selection and organisation of the material: 14 Bb3! (this is stronger than 14 Bxe5) and now:

- a) 14...b5 15 h3 Bb7 (15...c4 16 Bc2 Qc7 17 Nd4 Bd7 looks like a better way to play, but White is still better) 16 Bxe5 Bxe5 17 f4 Bg7 18 c4 e6 19 Nc3 bxc4?! (19...exd5 20 exd5 is stronger but still good for White, who will continue with f4-f5 and Ne4) 20 Bxc4 Bxc3 21 Rxc3 exd5 22 exd5 Qd6 23 f5 and Black was heading for trouble, Piskov-Stajic, Hungary 1989. The attack gives him lasting problems with his king, and White's passed pawn is clearly more dangerous than Black's.
- b) *ECO* gives 14...c4! 15 Bc2 b5 16 Nd4 Bb7 17 Rb1 a6 18 a4 e6 19 dxe6 fxe6 20 axb5 axb5 21 Bg5 Rdc8 22 Nxb5 Nd3 with compensation for the pawn, Henk-Hillenbrand, Germany 1993. However, first of all White is not forced to go for the pawn. Secondly, the compensation for the pawn is not enormous after a move such as 23 Qg4!?

14 Bd3 e5 15 Be3

Other bishop moves have been tried, but this appears to be the most natural.

15...Qe7 16 Qd2!

A good move. Before changing the shape of the position with f2-f4, White improves his queen. It turns out that Black has no obvious waiting move in the same way as White has.

The immediate 16 f4 led to equality after 16...exf4 17 Nxf4 c4 18 Bb1 Nc6, Browne-Kamsky, New York 1989.



TIP: Before altering the structure it is often a good idea to improve the positioning of your pieces. In this way you are more ready to handle the changes in the position.

16...b6 17 f4

The time for action has come. After 17 c4 Nb7! the knight will be well placed on d6.

17...c4?!

This turns out to be a positional mistake, as the weakening of the d4- and c6-squares soon has close-to-catastrophic consequences for Black. Better is 17...exf4 18 Bxf4 Bg4!. Now White played 19 Ng3 in Polugaevsky-Tukmakov, Moscow 1985, a game that eventually ended with a draw, even though some sources claim that White is a little better here. His only problem is that his knight cannot find a good square. For this reason, he should maybe consider 19 Rce1!?. After 19...c4 20 Bc2 Be5 White can bring the bishop into play with 21 Ba4!?.

18 Bc2 exf4 19 Bxf4 Nc6 (Diagram 5)

If the knight reaches e5 and maintains the blockade, Black will be fine. Unfortunately for him, White can prevent this scenario.

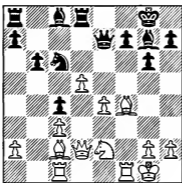


Diagram 5

White has a strong move

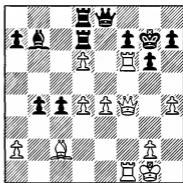


Diagram 6

Central ascendency

20 Nd4!

With this move White exploits the outpost on d4 to force Black into giving him a mounting centre. This is a good illustration of how positional flaws can be used tactically, and how tactics are used to obtain strategical gains.

20...Nxd4

After this move White has a lasting positional advantage. Better was the exchange sacrifice 20...Ne5 21 Bxe5 Bxe5 22 Nc6 Qd6! (Black cannot save his material, as after 22...Qc5+ 23 Qf2 Qxf2+ 24 Rxf2 Re8 25 Nxe5 Rxe5 26 Rcf1 the endgame is very bad for him – Yusupov) 23 Nxd8 Qxd8. Here White is obviously better, even though the rooks have no open lines on which to operate. He can keep very good winning chances if he activates his potentially bad bishop with 24 Ba4!.

21 cxd4 Ba6

Yusupov suggests that Black should consider giving up a pawn with 21...c3!?, but after 22 Qxc3 Ba6 23 Rfd1!? Rac8 24 Qe1 he does not think highly of Black's position.

22 Rf3 Rac8 23 Bh6

This is both logical and slightly risky. It is natural to want to exchange Black's best defensive piece, but it is not a good idea to allow counterplay.

Possible was 23 Qf2!? with the intention of pushing the h-pawn, both to support Bf4-g5 and to play h4-h5-h6. If Black continues as in the next note with 23...c3, Fritz 8 comes up with the following interesting pawn sacrifice: 24 e5!? Rxd5 25 Bb3 Rd7 (25...Bc4 26 Rfxc3 wins a pawn) 26 Bg3 Qg5 27 Rc2, when Black is under considerable pressure.

23...Bh8?

This is passive and clearly weak. Black had to try to create counterplay either with the hazardous 23...f5!? or with Yusupov's suggestion 23...c3! 24 Qe3 Bxh6 25 Qxh6 Qb4!. Now White should play 26 Qe3! with a clear positional advantage. Yusupov analyses 26 Rd1? Be2 27 Rxf7 Kxf7 28 Qxh7+ Ke8! (28...Kf8? 29 e5 Bxd1 30 Qh6+ Ke8 31 Bxg6+ Kd7 32 Qg7+ Qe7 33 e6+! Kd6 34 Qe5 mate) 29 e5, but following 29...Rxd5! (Yusupov only looked at 29...Rd7?) White's attack does not appear to be dangerous.

24 Qf2!

Black now has problems resisting a direct attack.

24...Bg7

Or 24...c3 25 e5! and White will win, as after 25...Rxd5 26 Bb3 Bc4 27 Rfxc3 b5 28 Bxc4 bxc4 29 Rxc4 Rxc4 30 Rxc4 Black has no compensation.

25 Bxg7 Kxg7 26 Rf1 Rc7

After 26...Rf8 27 e5! White will follow up with d5-d6.

27 Qg3! Bb7

Or 27...c3 28 Rxf7+! (28 R1f2 Bc4!) 28...Qxf7 29 Rxf7+ Rxf7 30 h4, when the combination of three strong pawns in the centre and Black's fragile king will decide the game in White's favour.

28 Rf6 Rcd7 29 Qf4 b5 30 d6 Qe8 31 h4 b4!? (Diagram 6)

Black is trying to create counterplay on the queenside, but it is too late!

32 h5

32 Ba4?? would be a grave blunder, as Black returns to the ranks of the living with 32...Qxe4!.

32...a5

Yusupov analyses 32...b3 33 axb3 cxb3 34 Bxb3 Qxe4 35 h6+ Kh8 36 Qxe4 Bxe4 37 Rxf7 Bf5 38 Rxd7 Bxd7 (38...Rxd7 39 g4! wins a piece) 39 Ra1, when the endgame is easily winning for White.

33 d5 c3 34 Ba4 Ba6 35 Rf2 Bc4 36 Kh2

Everything wins here; White is dominating the board.

36...Kg8 37 h6 Qf8 38 Bxd7 Rxd7 39 e5 Bxd5 40 e6 Bxe6 41 Rxe6 a4 42 Qe3 Rd8 43 d7 b3 44 Re8 1-0

White Plays 10 Rc1

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Bc4 0-0 8 Ne2 c5 9 Be3 Nc6 10 Rc1 (Diagram 7)

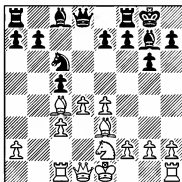


Diagram 7
White plays 10 Rc1

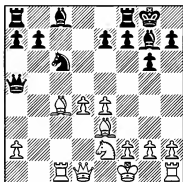


Diagram 8
White has bad intentions

As I mentioned earlier, Polugaevsky invented this move, or at least the plan behind it, and he used it in convincing fashion, defeating strong players such as Korchnoi. It was later employed by Shirov, who won some great games, including one against Gata Kamsky, who then went on to play it himself.

10 Rb1 has also been tried. It has some similar ideas, but is less dangerous for Black.

10...cxd4 11 cxd4 Qa5+ 12 Kf1 (Diagram 8)

White is, of course, not looking for an endgame, and as it is the h-pawn that is going to roll, castling is out of the question.

Statistics

Superficially the statistics look good for White (57% in 409 games). But in reality this good, solid score reflects only the fact that White was initially very successful. If we take the 139 games played in the last five years, the score drops to 50%. Furthermore, if we look at

12...Qa3!, as recommended below, then the score for White is a jaw-dropping 38% – a disaster.

Theoretical?

A little bit. If as Black you do not know 12...Qa3!, or cannot remember it, you might end up in trouble.

Game 13

□ Kamsky ■ Anand

Las Palmas 1995

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Bc4 c5 8 Ne2 0-0 9 Be3 Nc6 10 Rc1!? cxd4 11 cxd4 Qa5+ 12 Kf1! Qa3! (Diagram 9)

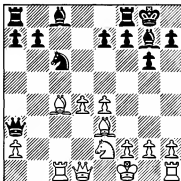


Diagram 9
The remedy

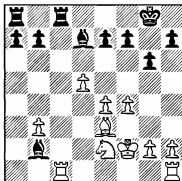


Diagram 10
Searching for activity

This was the antidote that Black players found after years of trouble. The main idea before this was to develop the f8-rook, obtaining air for the king, and to follow up with ...Nd8 to protect f7. But games like the following put this set-up out of fashion: 12...Bd7 13 h4 Rfc8 14 h5 Nd8 15 f4! (a new idea at the time) 15...Bb5 16 Bxb5 Qxb5 17 Kf2 e6! (17...Rxc1 18 Qxc1 Nc6 19 Qb1! gives White a clear advantage according to Shirov – it's the space) 18 g4! Rxc1 19 Qxc1 Nc6 20 Qb1! Qxb1 21 Rxb1 b6 22 f5! and Black was under a lot of pressure in Shirov-Kamsky, Linares 1993.

An earlier example highlights the problems that Black is facing if he is not careful: 12...Bd7 13 h4 Rac8? 14 h5 e5 15 hxg6 hxg6 16 d5 Nd4 17 Nxd4 Rxc4 18 Rxc4 Qa6 19 Qd3 exd4 20 Bxd4 Bb5 21 Qh3 Bxc4+ 22 Kg1 f6 23 Qh7+ Kf7 24 Rh6 1-0 Polugaevsky-Kudrin, New York 1989.

13 Qb3!

White cannot tolerate Black's queen on this annoying spot. After 13 Qd2 Rd8! (Ftacnik-Gurevich, Biel 1993) White already has to compromise his centre because of the idea of ...Nxd4! followed by ...e5. Another illustration of how careful White must be is 13 Rc3 Qd6 14 f3 Rd8 15 Rd3 Na5 16 Bb3 Bd7 17 Kf2 Bb5, when Black was already much better, Brettschneider-Schmenger, Binz 1995.

13...Qxb3

13...Qd6!? is also possible and in no way worse than the text move. It is simply a matter of taste.

14 Bxb3 Bd7 15 f4!

Kamsky had learned from his loss against Shirov, seizing space in the centre and on the kingside with this move.

15...Rfc8 16 Kf2

After 16 d5 Na5 White must refrain from 17 Rxc8+? Rxc8 18 Bxa7 Nxb3 19 axb3 Bb5 20 Kf2 Rc2 21 Re1 Bc3, when Black is winning material.

16...Na5 17 d5

17 Rxc8+ Rxc8 18 Rc1 Rxc1 19 Bxc1 Nxb3 20 axb3 f5! is a typical way for Black to reach a good endgame. After something like 21 e5 Be6 22 b4 Bc4 23 Nc3 e6 he has all the trumps: the two bishops, the possibility of a distant passed pawn, and no weaknesses at all. White, meanwhile, has a problem with his b-pawn.

17...Nxb3 18 axb3 Bb2! (Diagram 10)

With this pawn sacrifice Black secures the c-file. The only alternative was passivity with 18...a5 19 Bb6! or 18...b6 19 Bd4!, in both cases with some advantage for White.

19 Rxc8+ Rxc8 20 Bxa7

Otherwise White has nothing.

20...Rc2 21 Kf3

21 Ke3 leads to a forced draw after 21...Bg4 22 Re1 Bxe2 23 Rxe2 Bc1+ 24 Kd3 Rxe2 25 Kxe2 Bxf4 (Anand).

21...f5 22 exf5

22 e5 would be a mistake, as after 22...Rd2 Black regains his pawn with equality.

22...Bxf5

22...gxf5!? was assessed as equal by Nigel Short. This is a slightly optimistic evaluation, as the f-pawn will be slightly vulnerable and Black will not find it easy to win his pawn back.

23 Rd1 Ba3?

The plan of relocating to d6 is too passive; the bishop is well placed on b2 for the moment. It was better to bring up the king with 23...Kf7.

24 Be3 Bd6 25 h3

White must have been tempted to swap rooks, as the rook on c2 is Black's best placed piece and an important part of his counterplay: 25 Nd4!? Rb2 (25...Rc3 26 Rc1!) 26 Ra1! and now Black cannot avoid 26...Kf7 27 Bc1! Rb1 28 Rxb1 Bxb1. This endgame seems to be White's best winning chance and should be taken seriously. Still, Black has two bishops, and one of the advantages of this is that he can often choose to enter an opposite-coloured bishops ending. With this in mind, Black should be able to draw.

25...Ra2 26 Nd4 Bd7 27 Rc1 Kf7 28 g4

It is not obvious whether this is good for White or not.

28...h5! 29 Kg3 Ra5!

Now the extra pawn falls and the position is equal.

30 Ne6! Bxe6 31 dxe6+ Kxe6 32 Kf3 Ra2 33 Rd1 Rb2 34 Rd3 hxg4+ 35 hxg4 Rb1 36 Bd2 Rf1+ 37 Ke4 Rg1 38 Kf3 Rf1+ 39 Ke4 Rg1 40 Kf3 Rf1+ 41 Ke4 ½-½

Black Plays 8...Nc6 and 9...e5

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Bc4 0-0 8 Ne2 Nc6

9 Bg5 has been played, in order to prevent ...e5, but Black just plays 9...Qd7, with theory supporting his claims that his position is fine.

9 0-0 e5 (Diagram 11)

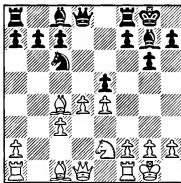


Diagram 11
Black plays ...e7-e5

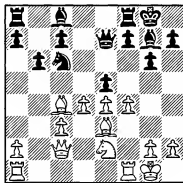


Diagram 12
Over-ambitious?

From a structural point of view, this system is completely different from the usual lines with ...c5.

10 Ba3

This is a direct attempt at refuting Black's play. The consequences are not completely clear: it seems that White gets compensation for his piece sacrifice, but nothing more.

Not much is known about the strategic consequences of simply developing pieces here, but the following two examples give some idea of what ideas exist:

a) 10 d5 is quite popular for some reason. Black now comes up with a far from obvious manoeuvre, guaranteeing him good counterplay: 10...Na5 11 Bd3 b6! (the knight is heading for a blockading square) 12 c4 Nb7 13 Nc3 Bd7 14 Bc2! (this piece needs to get into play) 14...f5 15 Ba4 Rf7 16 Ba3 Nd6 17 Bxd7 Qxd7 18 c5 Nxe4 19 Nxe4 fxe4 20 Qb3 and the players agreed a draw in this unbalanced position, Razuvaev-Stohl, Elenite 1992. The move 12...c5!? is equally possible. The idea is to play ...Nb7-d6 and later ...f5. To combat this White will have to play f2-f4 at some point, but maybe Black can play for a blockade of e5.

b) The most dangerous move for Black is probably 10 Be3!, aiming to defend the centre. 10...Qe7 11 Qc2 and now:

b1) 11...Na5 doesn't quite seem to work. Black will, of course, need to attack White's centre in some dynamic way, but the following pawn sacrifice looks dubious: 12 Bd3 c5!? (12...exd4 13 cxd4 c5 is the computers choice, but White is probably much better after 14 dxc5! Bxa1 15 Rxa1 – the dark squares are chronically weak) 13 dxc5 Be6 14 f4 Nc4 15 Bf2 f6? (better is 15...Bh6!) 16 f5 Bf7 17 Ng3 Rfd8 18 Rfd1 Rd7 19 Qe2 and White has a very clear edge, Sakaev-Hracek, Yugoslavia 2001.

b2) 11...b6!? with a further split:

b21) 12 Bd5 Bb7 13 dxe5 Qxe5 14 f4 Qe7 looks dangerous for Black at first, but it's actually not that clear. Black has ideas like ...Nd4 and White is probably not better after 15 e5 (strategically desirable but dynamically suspect) 15...Rad8! 16 Bf3 (or 16 Rad1 Rxd5 17 Rxd5 Nb4 18 cxb4 Bxd5 and Black will free the bishop with ...f7-f6!) 16...f6 17 Nd4 Qe8 18 Qb3+ Kh8. Following 19 Bxc6 Bxc6 20 Ne6 Black can continue with 20...Ba4! with unclear play.

b22) 12 f4 (**Diagram 12**) is very ambitious, but White is not fully developed, so he will be punished for his optimism. 12...exd4 13 cxd4 (13 Nxd4!? might be a better try for an advantage) 13...Nb4 14 Qb1 Bg4 15 a3 Bxe2 16 Bxe2 Nd5! 17 Qd3 Rfe8 18 e5 f5 with a very interesting position.

10...Re8

Now see Game 14.

Statistics

In 50 games with 9...e5 the results have been evenly divided: 17 wins each and 16 draws. So an aggressive system for Black, and also one

that has so far given good results, even though more games are needed in order to come to any reliable conclusions.

Theoretical?

There is no theory in this line beyond the game given below. The piece sacrifice and how Black should play against it is all that one needs to know.

Game 14

□ Topalov ■ Tukmakov

Palma de Mallorca 1992

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Bc4 0-0 8 Ne2 Nc6 9 0-0 e5 10 Ba3 Re8 11 Bxf7+!?

This is the idea behind 10 Ba3, even though other moves have also been played.

11...Kxf7 12 Qb3+ (Diagram 13)

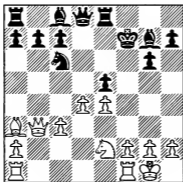


Diagram 13
A wandering king

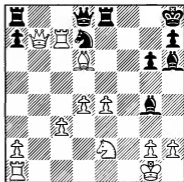


Diagram 14
A chance of counterplay

12...Kf6!

This was a new move at the time. Now, ten years later, when computers have enormously reshaped our way of thinking, this no longer seems as strange as it must have done to Topalov (then in his teens). 12...Be6 13 d5 Na5 14 dxe6+ Rxe6 15 Qa4 c6 16 Rad1 had been played a few times previously, and even though Black had enjoyed some success, his position is not enviable.

13 f4 Bh6!

Black creates a route back for his king.

14 fxe5+

Vaganian has suggested that White might be okay after 14 d5!? Na5 15 fxe5+ Kg7 16 Qa4 (with the idea of e5-e6), but this is very hard to

believe. After *ECO's* suggestion of 16...Bg4 Black should be doing well. Another option is 16...Be3+ (Fritz 8) 17 Kh1 c6 18 e6 b5 19 Rf7+ Kg8 20 Qb4 Nc4 21 Rf8+ Rxf8 22 e7 c5! 23 exd8Q cxb4 24 Qc7 bxa3 with a full-blown mess. Those computers...

14...Kg7 15 Rf6?

This move does not leave a very strong impression. What is the rook doing here besides preparing for the other rook to enter the game? More aggressive is 15 Qf7+ Kh8 16 Nf4!. Now one possible line is 16...Bg4? 17 Nd5! with the idea of Nf6 or Qf6+, and 17...Rg8 18 e6 is clearly better for White.

15...Bg4!

Black quickly develops.

16 Rf7+

16 Ng3 Nxd4! is, of course, out of the question.

16...Kh8 17 Qxb7 Nxe5 18 Rxc7?

Stronger was 18 dxe5, when White has some fighting chances. Black is still better after 18...Rb8! (18...Bxe2? 19 Rxc7 would suddenly give White a strong attack) 19 Qxc7 Qxc7 20 Rxc7 Bxe2 21 Kf2 Bd3 22 Rd1 Bxe4 23 Rdd7 g5!, but White has some chances of a draw.

18...Nd7!

Closing the seventh rank.

19 Bd6 (Diagram 14) 19...Rc8?

Eliminating all danger on the seventh rank, but Black misses a chance for activity. It was stronger to play 19...Rb8! 20 Qxa7 Rb2 21 Nf4 (or 21 Ng3 Qf6 and White cannot protect himself against all the threats) 21...Qh4!. In order to keep the game going, White has to play 22 Rxd7 Bxf4 23 Rxh7+ Qxh7 24 Qxh7+ Kxh7 25 Bxf4 Rxe4, but this is, of course, hopeless.

20 Ng3 Rxc7 21 Bxc7 Qg5 22 h3 Qe3+ 23 Kh2 Qxc3!

Picking up a free pawn.

24 Rf1 Be6 25 d5 Bg8 26 Bf4?

26 Qxa7 was much better.

26...Bxf4 27 Rxf4 Nf6 28 Qa6 Kg7 29 Qxa7+ Bf7 30 Ne2 Qe5

With the threat of ...g5, winning a rook.

31 Kg1 Re7!

Now e4 is falling.

32 Qd4 Qxd4+ 33 Nxd4 Rxe4 0-1

Systems with ...b7-b6

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Bc4 0-0 8 Ne2 b6 (Diagram 15)

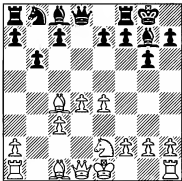


Diagram 15
A double fianchetto

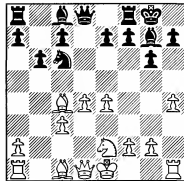


Diagram 16
Black prepares ...Na5

There are two ways to play the ...b6 systems (in which Black delays or omits ...c5): with the immediate 8...b6 and with 8...Nc6 9 0-0 b6 (see Game 17). The main difference between the two options is that in the former case White has not yet castled and therefore he has an aggressive attacking move, which is by far the most popular choice here...

9 h4!

All the white pieces are perfectly placed for this advance. The c1-bishop goes to h6, the knight will be impeccable on f4 and the c4-bishop aims directly at Black's king.

White has also tried a more relaxed approach, but it is hardly any danger to Black. Following 9 0-0 Bb7 10 e5 Nc6 11 Nf4 Na5 12 Bd3 c5 13 Be3 Rc8 14 Qg4 Nc6 15 Rad1 cxd4 16 cxd4 Nb4 17 Bb1 Nc2? White began a menacing attack with 18 h4! (Gligoric-Sax, Vrbas 1977). However, stronger would have been 17...Ba6 18 Rfe1 Nc2, when Black is no worse.

9...Nc6! (Diagram 16)

This has become the standard choice over time. Black cannot live with the bishop on c4, so he plans to chase it away with ...Na5.

Other moves are not so good. 9...Bb7 10 Qd3! does not slow down White's attack at all, while Black has also had bad experiences with 9...Ba6?, for example 10 Bxa6 Nxa6 11 h5 c5 12 hxg6 hxg6 13 Qd3! Qc8 14 Qg3 with a strong attack, Womack-Menzel, USA 1970.

After 9...Nc6 White has a choice: 10 h5 is considered in Game 15, while 10 Bd5!? is the subject of Game 16. Many sources prefer 10 Bd5!?, but it seems that both moves are equally challenging for Black.

Statistics

8...b6 9 h4: White has a great score of 69%, winning 53% of all the games and losing only 14%. These statistics become even worse for Black as we move closer to present date. From 1990-2003 there is a overall success rate for White of 72%, even better than Black's success rate against the Morra Gambit! Theoretically the line should be okay for Black, but it seems that in practical play this is unimportant.

8...Nc6 9 0-0 b6: Over 273 games White has scored only 48% (winning 32%, drawing 32% and losing 36%). However, if we take only games from 1990 onwards, the statistics are more predictable, White scoring 54% in 129 games (40% wins, 28% draws and 32% losses). Even so, this is pretty satisfactory for Black.

Theoretical?

The great attraction of these systems, especially the one with 8...Nc6, is that they are not very theoretical. Obviously as Black you need to know what you are doing if White is attacking down the h-file and mate seems only two moves away. However, if both players castle kingside, then sound positional judgement can take over, and theory is something that can be left to the physicists.

Game 15

□ Dreev ■ Adorjan

Alushta 1994

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Bc4 0-0 8 Ne2 b6 9 h4! Nc6! 10 h5 Na5 11 Bd3 e5

The alternative 11...c5 has also been played, but this makes more sense.

12 Be3!

Time has proven this to be clearly the most dangerous approach – White should not fire his gun too soon. Sometimes the h-pawn can be used for purposes other than exchanging on g6.

The line 12 hxg6 fxg6 13 Be3 Qe7 14 Rc1 c6 gives Black good play. Here are two examples:

a) 15 f4 exf4 16 Nxf4 Bf5! and Black was already better, Tarjan-Adorjan, Hastings 1976/77.

b) 15 0-0 Be6 (as so often in the Grünfeld, the main idea is to play for the c4-square) 16 f4 Nc4 17 Bxc4 Bxc4 18 fxe5 Rxf1+ 19 Qxf1 Rf8 20 Qe1 (Seirawan-Leko, Moscow 1994), and now Black should have played 20...Qa3! 21 Qd2 Qxa2 22 Qxa2 Bxa2 23 Ra1 Bc4 with better chances (Seirawan).

12...Qe7 13 Qd2 exd4 14 cxd4

White could also have chosen to exchange the dark-squared bishops in return for accepting a weak pawn on c3 with 14 Bxd4!? Bb7 15

Bxg7 Kxg7 16 Qe3 Rae8 17 hxg6 fxd6 18 f3 Kg8. However, Black has no more to fear in this position than White. Where is the white king going to go?

14...Bb7 15 e5?

This starts the game for real, but the pawn sacrifice does not bring the initiative White hoped it would. Instead, 15 f3! is better. Then White would have kept a very slight advantage, even though the future would have been very uncertain.

15...Bxg2 16 Rg1 Bf3 17 Ng3 Qd7!

Apparently this was a new move at the time. Adorjan had once played the horrible 17...f5? 18 Nxf5! against Timman and had been completely busted. Now the position is to his advantage rather than disadvantage.

18 Nf5! (Diagram 17)

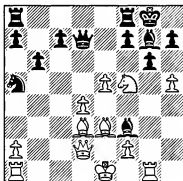


Diagram 17
The knight is taboo

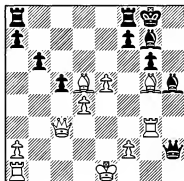


Diagram 18
No exchanges!

This looks dangerous. Black cannot take the knight or the pawn on h5, but he has a strong resource that brings his only inactive minor piece back into the game.

18...Nc4!

Or:

a) 18...gxf5? 19 Rxd7+! Kxg7 20 Bh6+ Kh8 21 Bg7+! Kxg7 (21...Kg8 22 Qg5! wins) 22 Qg5+ Kh8 23 Qf6+ Kg8 24 h6 and Black will be mated.

b) 18...Bxh5? 19 Nxd7 Kxg7 20 Bh6+ Kg8 and now not 21 Bxf8? Qxd4!, when Black is clearly better, but rather the dangerous 21 Qf4!, attacking the dark squares and winning the exchange if desired.

19 Bxc4

Forced. White is in trouble after 19 Qc1 Nxe5! due to the unprotected bishop on d3.

19...Qxf5 20 hxd6 hxg6 21 Rg5

It is difficult for White to prove compensation for his pawn.

a) After 21 Bh6? Black wins in the following simple fashion:
21...Qe4+! 22 Kf1 (22 Be3 c5! and White's centre will collapse)
22...Rad8 23 Bxg7 (23 Be3 Bxe5! 24 Bd3 Qh4 25 dxe5 Be4! and
White's king is in trouble) 23...Rxd4! 24 Qh6 Rd1+! 25 Rxd1 Qxc4+
and White is mated.

b) 21 Bd3!? Qh5 22 Rg5 Qh1+ 23 Bf1 Rad8 gives Black good play to go
with his extra pawn.

21...Qh3

The queen looks a little offside here. 21...Qe4! appears to be stronger:
22 Bd3 Qh4 23 Rg3 c5!, when White's centre is collapsing and 24 Rxf3
allows 24...Qh1+, winning a rook.

22 Qc3!

White is starting to coordinate. But not 22 Rxc6?? Qh1+ and Black
wins a rook.

22...Bh5 23 Rg3

At first White seems to be doing well after 23 Bd5, as Black cannot
play 23...Rad8? due to 24 Rg3 Qd7 25 Bc6, giving White very good
counterplay. However, instead Black can ignore the attack with
23...c5! 24 dxc5 (24 Bxa8 Rxa8 25 Rg3 Qh1+ 26 Kd2 Qd5 illustrates
how much White needs his light squared bishop; there is nowhere for
his rooks to penetrate and his king is out in the open) 24...Rad8 25
Qc4 bxc5, when Black has a strong attack against White's fragile
king. Note that in this last variation 25...Bf3?! would be a mistake be-
cause of 26 Bxf3 Qxf3 27 Rxc6! Qh1+ 28 Ke2 Qxa1 29 Rxc7+ Kxc7 30
Qg4+ with a draw.

23...Qh4?!

Ftacnik gives a stronger line 23...Qh2! 24 Bd5 c5! with the idea 25
Bxa8? Rxa8 26 dxc5 Rd8 27 Kf1 Qh1+ 28 Rg1 Qh3+ 29 Ke1 Qh2! 30
Kf1 Bxe5 and Black wins.

24 Bd5 c5!

24...Rad8? 25 Bg5! would be uncomfortable. After 25...Qh2 26 Bc6
White dominates the position. The move ...c5 is very important for
Black as it makes his pieces come alive.

25 Bg5

25 Bxa8? Rxa8 would simply give Black control of the light squares.
There are not enough open files to take advantage of the extra rook,
but White would certainly miss his light-squared bishop.

25...Qh2! (Diagram 18)

Black avoids a queen trade.

26 Rg2?

After 26 Qe3! cxd4 27 Qf4! Rae8 28 Bf6 Bxf6 29 Qxf6 Re6! 30 Qf4!
Kh7 a very unclear position arises. Here White should continue with
31 Rc1!, but not 31 Bxe6? Qh1+ 32 Kd2 Qxa1 and Black wins.

26...Qh1+ 27 Kd2 cxd4 28 Rxb1!

The right choice: White has better chances in the endgame. After 28 Qxd4 Qh3 29 Rg3 (29 Bxa8 Rxa8 30 Rg3 Qe6 also gives Black good attacking chances) 29...Qd7 30 f4 Rac8 White suffers from an important aspect of the middlegame – king safety.

28...dxc3+ 29 Kc2

Black has a better endgame following 29 Kxc3 Rad8! 30 Bxd8 Rxd8 31 Rxh5 Rxd5!? (White is okay after 31...gxh5 32 Kd4).

29...Rad8 30 Bxd8

Or 30 Be4 Rd4! and Black will eventually win.

30...Rxd8 31 Be4 Rd4! (Diagram 19)

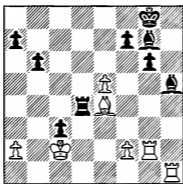


Diagram 19
Attacking the bishop

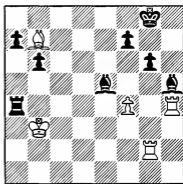


Diagram 20
A delightful cheapo

Adorjan plays this game with great energy.

32 Bb7

32 f3 Rxe4! 33 fxe4 Bf3 34 Rgh2 Bxe4+ is winning for Black.

32...Rd2+

This move has been criticised, but a closer look actually shows that White has good counterplay after the alternatives:

a) 32...Bg4 is also not as strong as the commentators claim. After 33 Re1! White can still put up a struggle.

b) 32...Bxe5? 33 Rxh5! Rd2+ and now:

b1) White loses if he tries to keep his material advantage: 34 Kc1? Bd6! 35 Be4 Ba3+ 36 Kb1 Rb2+ 37 Ka1 Re2 38 Bxg6?! (38 Kb1 is a better try, but is still very bad for White) 38...fxg6 39 Rxg6+ Kf7 40 Rg1 c2 41 Rhh1 Rd2! and Black simply advances his queenside pawns.

b2) 34 Kb3! Rb2+ (or 34...c2 35 Rh1 Rd1 36 Kxc2 Rxh1 37 Rxc6+ with a draw) 35 Kc4 c2 36 Rh1 Rb1 37 Rgg1 Rxc1 38 Rxc1 Bf4 39 Kb5! and White will easily achieve a draw.

33 Kxc3 Rxa2

Also interesting is 33...Rd7!? 34 Rxh5! gxh5 35 Be4 Kf8 36 Rg5 h4.

34 f4 Ra4 35 Rh4??

Time trouble probably played a part here. 35 Rf1 b5 36 Bd5 gives White good drawing chances.

35...Bxe5+!

White did not overlook this cheapo.

36 Kb3 (Diagram 20) 36...Bd1+!

This is what he missed! Now Black wins.

37 Rc2 Rxf4 38 Rhh2 Rd4 39 Rh1 Bxc2+ 40 Kxc2 Ra4 41 Bc6 Ra2+ 0-1

Game 16

□ Spassky ■ Timman

Amsterdam 1977

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Bc4 0-0 8 Ne2 b6 9 h4! Nc6 10 Bd5!?

The main idea of this move is to cause some obstruction in Black's camp.

10...Qd7!

Time has proven that this is the only move that sufficiently coordinates Black's control over the light squares.

After 10...Bb7 11 h5 e6 12 Bb3 Na5 White ignores black's 'threat' of exchanging the bishop, as all the action will take place on the kingside: 13 hxg6 hxg6 14 Qd3 Nxb3 15 axb3 e5 16 Qh3 f6 17 d5! (patience!) 17...Qc8 18 Qh7+ Kf7 19 Bh6 Rg8 20 f4 (Petran-Krnic, Belgrade 1977). Theory assesses this as clearly better for White, but this of course is incorrect – White is completely winning. He will play f4-f5 and answer ...gxf5 with Ne2-g3-f5 with devastating effect.

Black could also organise his forces with 10...Bd7, but White's attack continues to rage on. 11 h5 e6 12 Bb3 Na5 13 e5! (fighting for the dark squares and confirming a positional advantage based on the ineffective bishop on g7) 13...c5 14 Qd3 Nxb3 15 axb3 cxd4 16 cxd4 f5 (desperation already) 17 hxg6 hxg6 18 Nf4 g5 19 Ng6 Bc6 20 Qh3 Qxd4 21 Ne7+ Kf7 22 Qh5+ Kxe7 23 Ba3+ Kd7 24 Rd1 1-0 Tarjan-Strauss, USA 1978.

11 h5 (Diagram 21) 11...Ba6?

11...e6 is absolutely necessary. Black cannot live with the powerful bishop on d5, and waiting for one move with 11...Ba6 is enough to give White a winning attack. After 11...e6 play continues with 12 Bb3 and now:

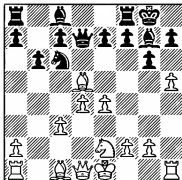


Diagram 21
A dangerous attack

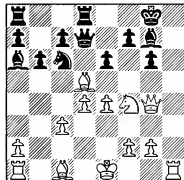


Diagram 22
White has a decisive sacrifice

a) 12...Ba6? 13 hxc6 hxc6 14 Nf4 Rfd8 15 Nxe6!! fxe6 16 Qg4 with a winning attack, Cramling-Kindermann, Hamburg 1991.

b) Black should continue with this slightly odd 12...e5!, reopening the long diagonal down to his king. However, the counterattack against the centre is absolutely essential, and the need to prevent Nf4 is illustrated by note 'a'. One example is 13 hxc6 hxc6 14 Bh6 Bxh6 15 Rxh6 Kg7 16 Qd2 Ba6 17 Ng3 Qg4!, Finegold-De Boer, Wijk an Zee 1992. The evaluation of this position has varied somewhat. Some find the position unclear; others think that White is slightly better. Actually, it does not matter so much. The main thing is whether or not you thrive in such a position.

12 hxc6 hxc6 13 Nf4 e6

This is too late, as now White is not forced to retract the bishop but can instead go on to break down Black's kingside.

14 Qg4! Rfd8 (Diagram 22) 15 Bxe6!!

White is crashing through the gates.

15...fxe6 16 Qxc6 Bc4

White also wins after 16...Ne5 17 Qh7+ Kf8 18 Rh3! Qd6 19 Ng6+! Nxc6 20 Rf3+.

17 Qh7+ Kf7 18 Nh5!

TIP: When you attack, remember to pinpoint the weakest spot in your opponent's camp. Here that is g7.

18...Rg8 19 Rh3!

Including yet another piece in the attack. Everybody is going to have a piece of fun in this game!

19...Raf8 20 Nxc7 Rh8 21 Rf3+ Ke7 22 Ba3+ Nb4 23 Bxb4+ c5 24 dxc5 Rxc7 25 cxb6+ 1-0



A fantastic performance by Spassky, where it is possible to see the enormous strength that made him world champion in 1969.

Game 17

□ Yusupov ■ Gulko

Hastings 1989/90

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Bc4 0-0 8 Ne2 Nc6 9 0-0 b6!?

This method of play is designed to avoid theoretical battles. According to the latest edition of *ECO*, Black is not worse here, and there is no particular reason why he should be. The whole point, of course, is that White no longer has any attacking ideas based on h2-h4 as in the two previous games. It really makes you wonder why Black should ever allow the attack when he can get the same set-up without doing so.

10 Bg5

As there is no attack on d4 and Black might have some ideas with ...e7-e5, this makes good sense.

10...Bb7 11 Qd2

This is more harmonious than 11 f4 Na5 12 Bd3 c5 13 d5 f6 14 Bh4 f5! 15 Rc1 fxe4 16 Bxe4 Nc4 17 Qd3 Nd6, which gave Black an easy game in Gligoric-Hartston, Moscow 1977.

11...Qd6 12 Rad1

12 Rac1, indirectly protecting c4, has also been played.

12...Na5!

After developing his pieces, Black is both fighting for the c4-square and getting to pressurise the centre with ...c7-c5.

13 Bd3 c5 14 d5 e6!

Black is forced to challenge White's centre. He would only weaken his own position after 14...c4 15 Bc2 e6 16 dxe6 Qxe6 17 Nd4, when White is better – Gulko.

15 c4 Ba6 16 Qc2

White has erected a broad centre, but will have some problems guarding it. After the ambitious 16 Rc1 exd5 17 cxd5?! Black can achieve his strategic aim with 17...Bxd3 18 Qxd3 f5! 19 f3 (or 19 Nf4 fxe4 20 Qxe4 Rae8 21 Ne6 Rf5 and Black is much better) 19...fxe4 20 fxe4 Nc6!. The blockade of the pawns, especially with a knight on e5, gives Black excellent winning chances. He has mobile passed pawns on the queenside plus some potential threats against White's king

16...exd5 17 exd5

17 cxd5?? c4! cannot be recommended!

17...Qd7!

Freeing the d6-square for the knight and preventing the white queen from disturbing the a6-bishop from a4. After 17...Rae8? 18 Bd2! White would be much better, as 18...Nb7? 19 Qa4 is terrible.

18 Ng3 (Diagram 23)

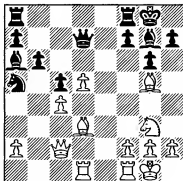


Diagram 23
Black must be careful

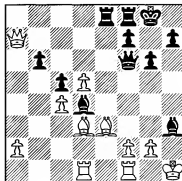


Diagram 24
Black unleashes a stunner

18...Rae8

Black includes all the pieces in his strategic thinking. If 18...Nb7? White could continue with 19 Nf5!! gxf5?! (otherwise Black is very weak on the dark squares) 20 Bxf5 Qd6 21 Bxh7+ Kh8 22 Rd3! and there is no defence against Rh3 with a deadly attack.

19 Bd2 Nb7 20 Ne4

Now White can no longer swing the rook to the kingside, so instead he opts for strategic aims. Black may wish to play ...f5 at some time, but right now it would weaken e6 too much.

20...Nd6! 21 Nxd6 Qxd6

Black has played the opening excellently. He has good scope for his pieces and a potential break with ...b5, which would destroy the white centre. The next plan is to regroup his bishop to d7 via c8 and play ...a6 to prepare ...b5. White should probably accept that he has achieved no advantage from the opening and seek heavy exchanges with 22 Rfe1. Instead he goes for the a7-pawn.

22 Qa4?! Bc8 23 Qxa7

WARNING: Grabbing a pawn a long way from the battle scene is often a risky venture. Sometimes it's impossible to get back in time.

23...Be5!

White's queen is far away from the kingside, so naturally this is where Black starts his action.

24 h3?!

24 Bh6? doesn't work because of 24...Bxh2+ 25 Kh1 Bf4 and now:

a) 26 Bxf4 Qxf4 27 Qxb6 Re5 28 Kg1 Rh5 29 f3 Rh2! and Black wins due to the threat of ...Qh4! and the possible inclusion of the bishop in



the attack. 30 Rfe1 Qh4 31 Kf1 Qg3 32 Rd2 Rh1+ 33 Ke2 Qxe1 mate is one way for the game to end.

b) 26 Bxf8 Qxf8 27 Kg1 Qh6 28 g3 Bg4!! and Black wins.

The best try, according to Gulko, is 24 f4! Bd4+ 25 Kh1 Bd7 26 Rb1 b5 27 Qa3 Ra8 28 Qb3 b4 29 Qc2 Ba4 30 Qc1 Bd7 31 Qc2, after which Black can repeat the position with 31...Ba4 or try for more with 31...Ra5, pressurising the weak spot a2.

24...Bd4! 25 Kh1

White finds it difficult to reintroduce the queen into the action, for example 25 Qa3 Bxh3! and now:

a) 26 gxh3 Qg3+ 27 Kh1 Qxh3+ 28 Kg1 Be5 29 f4 Bd4+ is a common theme.

b) 26 Bxg6!? (opening up the third rank for the queen) 26...Bxg2! 27 Bxh7+ Kxh7 28 Kxg2 Rg8+ 29 Kh1 Re3!! (cutting off the queen again) 30 Bxe3 Qg6 31 Qd3 f5 and again White's king has no support from its supposed friends.

c) 26 Qb3!? is a possible improvement over Gulko's analysis. The idea is that on 26...Qg3 White survives with 27 Be4!.

25...Qf6! 26 Be3

Three variations emphasise the shortcomings of White's strategy:

a) 26 Qc7 Be5 27 Qc6 Qh4!.

b) 26 f4 Qh4 27 Be1 Rxe1! 28 Rdx1 Bxh3.

c) 26 Kh2 Bxh3! 27 gxh3 Qf3.

26...Bxh3!! (Diagram 24)

Black cannot improve his pieces any more and goes in for the kill.

27 Bxd4 cxd4 28 d6

Or 28 gxh3 Qf3+ and White has no defence:

a) 29 Kg1 Re5 30 Rfe1 Rg5+ 31 Kf1 Rg2 32 Re2 Rh2 33 Ke1 Rh1+ 34 Kd2 Rxd1+ 35 Kxd1 Qxd3+.

b) 29 Kh2 Re5 30 Rg1 Qxf2+ 31 Rg2 Qf3 32 Qa4 Rh5! 33 Qc2! (the queen has to return to base; the only line Gulko gives is 33 Rg3 Qf2+ 34 Rg2 Qf4+ 35 Rg3 Rg5 36 Rgd1 h5 followed by ...h4) 33...Rxb3+ 34 Kg1 Re8! (the last soldier enters the battlefield!) 35 Bf1 Qh5 36 Rxd4 Re5! (amazingly Black has all the time in the world to conduct his attack; White cannot defend himself) 37 Rh2 Rg5+ 38 Kh1 Qf3+ 39 Bg2 Rxh2+ 40 Kxh2 Qg3+ 41 Kg1 Qe1+ 42 Kh2 Qe5+ and Black wins.

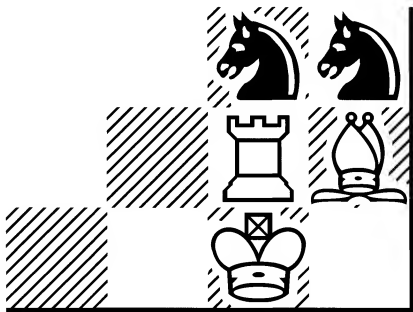
28...Re5 29 f4 Re3 30 Qb7 Qh4 31 Kg1 Bxg2!

Black now wins the queen and has an easy job in converting the material advantage into a full point.

32 Qxg2 Rg3 33 Be4 Rxg2+ 34 Bxg2 Qf6 35 d7 Qd6 36 f5 Qxd7 37 Bd5 Qe7 38 Rf3 Qe5 39 Rdf1 g5 40 f6 Re8 41 Kh1 g4 42 Rf5 Qe3 43 Rh5 Re5 44 Rh2 d3 45 Bxf7+ Kxf7 46 Rxh7+ Kg6 47 f7 Kxh7 48 f8Q Qh3+ 0-1

Modern Exchange Variation: 8 Rb1

- Introduction
- The Positional Approach with 9...b6
- Black Plays 9...Qa5
- Black Plays 9...Nc6
- Black Plays 9...cxd4 10 cxd4 Qa5+



Introduction

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Nf3 c5 8 Rb1 (Diagram 1)

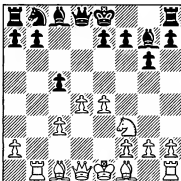


Diagram 1
White plays 8 Rb1

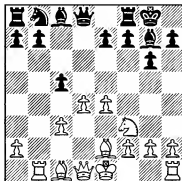


Diagram 2
A wide choice

In the last 10-15 years there has been a change in the way the Exchange Variation has been played. There has been a rapid development of the theory, especially in the sharp lines where White sacrifices a pawn and allows Black to have two passed pawns on the queenside. But before we turn to them, let us take a look at why 8 Rb1! is such an important move. If White instead plays 8 Be2, then Black has 8...Nc6!. This is a move that White always wants to meet with d4-d5, but here 9 d5 allows 9...Bxc3+ 10 Bd2 Bxa1. According to theory, White only has level chances after 11 Qxa1 Nd4 12 Nxd4 cxd4 13 Qxd4 f6. Actually, it looks like White should be careful, as the best he can possibly achieve seems to be simply to win the exchange back. So instead of 8 Be2, White usually chooses 8 Be3 or 8 Rb1. The more positional lines with 8 Be3 are seen in Chapter 4; here we study 8 Rb1. After 8 Rb1 play normally continues with 8...0-0 9 Be2 (Diagram 2). Now we have a myriad of possibilities. The main line is 9...cxd4 10 cxd4 Qa5+ 11 Bd2! Qxa2 12 0-0, after which there are again many options for Black. Then there is 9...Nc6 10 d5! Ne5 11 Nxe5 Bxe5 12 Qd2, which is a large complex on its own. For the more quiet personalities there is 9...b6 and, finally, we have 9...Qa5, which looks like an inferior version of 9...cxd4 10 cxd4 Qa5+.

The Positional Approach with 9...b6

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Nf3 c5 8 Rb1 0-0 9 Be2 b6 (Diagram 3)

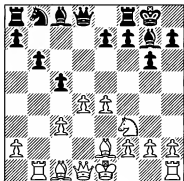


Diagram 3
The positional approach

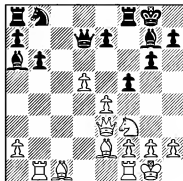


Diagram 4
Simply horrible

With this move Black is simply trying to develop his pieces. His main hope is to make it into an endgame where the passed pawns on the queenside will prove their worth. The problem is, of course, that White is better developed and has more space in the centre. To make it into the endgame without any scratches is not an easy job.

Statistics

The general passivity of this system for Black is reflected in the statistics. In 564 games Black has an overall score of 42% (38% losses, 39% draws and only 23% wins).

Theoretical?

Not really. Playing good moves is more important.

Game 18

□ Kantsler ■ Alterman

Tel Aviv 1999

1 Nf3 Nf6 2 e4 c5 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 d4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 g6 7 e4 Bg7 8 Rb1 0-0 9 Be2

By transposition we have arrived at the main position.

9...b6

9...Bg4 has also been played a few times. After 10 0-0 Bxf3 11 Bxf3 cxd4 12 cxd4 Bxd4 13 Rxb7 Nc6 14 Qa4 theory slightly favours White, which seems reasonable.

10 0-0 Bb7 11 Qd3 Ba6

Without this move Black has nothing. The possible exchange of the bishops eases his defence.

12 Qe3 cxd4 13 cxd4 Qd7 14 d5!

An illustration of what Black is really hoping for in this line is seen from the following game: 14 Ba3 Rc8 15 Rfc1 Bxe2 16 Rxc8+ Qxc8 17 Qxe2 Qa6 18 Qxa6 Nxa6 19 Rc1 Kf8!? 20 Kf1 Ke8 21 Ke2 Kd7 22 d5 Re8 23 Kd3 Nc7 24 Rc2 e6 25 dxe6+ Nxe6 26 g3 Rd8 27 e5 Ke8+ 28 Ke4 Bf8 29 Bxf8 Kxf8 and the endgame was even, San Segundo-Leko, Madrid 1998.

14...f5?? (Diagram 4)

This was a new move, and also a horrible mistake. One cannot help but wonder what can inspire a strong grandmaster like Alterman to play such a hideous move. The weakness of e6 and e7 immediately catches the eye, and Black has little active play to justify this recklessness. Quite obviously Alterman was capable of understanding this, so why did he go for the move anyway?

Well, it is hard to explain. And does a poor writer really trash the competition if he points out the mistakes of others? No, of course not. We are not the moves we play, and chess writers are not in competition with other writers or with chess players, but rather in alliance with the chess reader, and there some objectivity and honesty is required.

Here it looks as if Alterman simply remembered that he is a great player, but forgot that this fact matters little when you play bad moves. He simply took too much risk in his attempt to make the position sharper, and forgot to evaluate his opponent's chances of winning. Or at least that is a qualified guess.

Other moves played in this position include the following:

- a) The exchange with 14...Bxe2?! only releases White from some defensive duties and removes the potential threat to the a-pawn: 15 Qxe2 Qa4 16 Bg5 Re8 17 Rfc1 Na6 18 Rc4 Qd7 19 Rd1 Nc5 20 e5 with a clear advantage for White in Salov-Sokolov, Haifa 1989. Black is badly coordinated, has no active play and struggles to find a good way to deal with the two suffocating white pawns in the centre. The real problem for Black is that his queenside pawn majority has no value right now, nor in any near future.
- b) The best move is thought to be 14...Qa4!, when after 15 Bxa6 Nxa6 16 Ba3 Nc5 17 e5 Rac8 18 Rfd1 Rfd8 Black was okay in Khenkin-Miralles, Voskresensk 1990. The big difference here is that the queen on a4 gives White some trouble with his coordination.



NOTE: Because theory assesses a line as equal, it does not mean that it gives equal results, or that it is not better to be White than Black.

For example, in this instance only one line leads to equality for Black, and even this might not be that safe. Black may continue to walk on a tightrope whenever White comes up with a new idea. Eventually Black may be able to prove equality, but in practice a few losses may have to be accepted. So, it's a level position here, but not a line giving easy equality. In practice it is harder to play Black.

15 Ba3!

White develops, eyeing the weakness in Black's position.

15...fxe4 16 Qxe4 Bxe2

We're just out of the opening and Black is already lost. After 16...Qf5!? 17 Qxe7 Qxd5 18 Rbd1! Qxa2 (or 18...Qf5 19 Nh4! Qf6 20 Qxf6 Rxf6 21 Rd8+ Kf7 22 Bxa6 and Black must resign) 19 Rd2 Qb3 20 Qe4! White wins the exchange and retains his positional advantage.

17 Qxe2 Qxd5 18 Rfd1

All White's pieces are in the game and now the final attack can be orchestrated.

18...Qf5

There is no way to save the position. After 18...Qc6 19 Ng5 Re8 20 Rbc1 Qf6 21 Qc4+ e6 22 Nxe6!! Black is defenceless, as 22...Qxe6 23 Rd8! Qxc4 24 Rxe8+ Kf7 25 Re7+ Kg8 26 Rxc4 wins easily for White. Also, 18...Qf7 19 Ng5 Qf4 20 Bxe7 is hopeless.

19 Bxe7 Re8 20 Ng5! Be5

Black cannot save himself with 20...Kh8 21 Rb5 Qf8!?, as White has the pretty winning line 22 Re5! Qf4 23 Bf6! Rxe5 24 Rd8+ Re8 25 Qxe8 mate.

21 Qc4+ Kh8 22 Rb5! (Diagram 5)

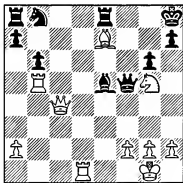


Diagram 5
Punishment is swift

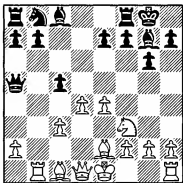


Diagram 6
9...Qa5



TIP: When you attack it is often a good idea to include your worst placed piece.

Now the rook adds to the pressure. The main threat is simply 23 Rxe5.

22...Nd7

Or 22...Rxe7 23 Rd8+ Kg7 24 Rg8+ Kf6 25 f4 Qxf4 26 Rf8+ Kxg5 27 Qxf4+ and White wins.

23 g4! Bxh2+

After 23...Rac8 24 gxf5 Rxc4 25 Rxd7 White wins a piece.

24 Kg2 1-0

Black Plays 9...Qa5

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Nf3 c5 8 Rb1 0-0 9 Be2 Qa5 (Diagram 6)

This move is all but forgotten now, as it seems much more logical to play ...Qa5 with check. The main argument for 9...Qa5 is that the exchange on d4 is no longer obligatory. With White's lead in development, Black does well to keep the position somewhat closed.

Statistics

In 369 games White has a strong score of 59% (winning 41% of the games, drawing 36% and only losing 23%). Statistically this is where a system comes close to being dubious, but then again statistics do not matter in an individual game, only an objective evaluation of the position and good play does.

Theoretical?

More so than 9...b6, but less so than the following systems in this chapter. It seems that Black must know a few lines well, while White should just decide on one line and stick to it.

Game 19

□ Teichmann ■ Graeser

Correspondence 1989

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Nf3 Bg7 8 Rb1! 0-0 9 Be2 Qa5 10 0-0 Qxa2

The only move that justifies Black's play. 10...Qxc3 11 d5 Qa5 12 Bg5 is known to give White a strong initiative.

11 Bg5 Qe6 12 Qd3

This attack was very popular at the end of the 1980s, but it seems as if Black has come out of that battle okay. Still, it is easy to distrust Black's strategy.

Another dangerous line is 12 e5 Rd8 13 Qa4 Qc6 14 Qb3 with an initiative for White. Agzamov-Mikhalchishin, Riga 1985 continued 14...Be6 15 c4 cxd4 16 Bxe7 Rc8 17 Nxd4 Bxc4 18 Nxc6 Bxb3 19 Nxb8 Be6 20 Bd6 Rcx8 21 Bxb8 Rxb8 22 Ba6 Bxe5 23 Rxb7 Rxb7 24 Bxb7 a5 25 Re1 f6 26 Rd1 Kf7 27 Bc6 and White somehow managed to win the endgame. However, Black can improve with 20...Bf8!, which is unclear (Damljanovic-Schmidt, Athens 1984, amongst others).

12...b6 13 d5 Qd6 14 e5!? (Diagram 7)

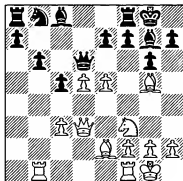


Diagram 7

White gives up a second pawn

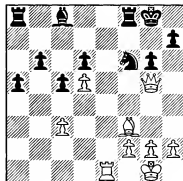


Diagram 8

A menacing a-pawn

This idea was originally Shirov's. White is trying to justify his choices by maintaining the initiative. For this reason he sacrifices a second pawn.

14...Bxe5 15 Nxe5 Qxe5 16 Qd2 Nd7!

Black should both develop as quickly as possible and also bring aid to the kingside, so really this is the only move. 16...Qd6?! has also been played, but now White is not forced to play 17 Bf3 and can instead play 17 Qe3! Re8 18 Bf3 Nd7 19 Bf4 Qf6 20 d6 Rb8 21 Rbd1 with a strong initiative (Shirov-Akopian, Tbilisi 1989).

17 Bf3 Qd6 18 Rfe1 f6!?

This fabulous idea is found in Shirov's notes to the above-mentioned game.

19 Re6

19 Bh6?! Ne5! 20 Bxf8 Nxf3+ 21 gxf3 Kxf8 gives Black excellent chances.

19...fxg5!

This was, of course, the idea. Now White can do Black little harm.

19...Qb8? loses in a devastating attack after 20 d6 fxe5 21 dxe7 Re8 22 Qxg5! (22 Qd5 is also a good move) 22...Bb7 (22...Kf7 23 Bd5! Kg7 24 Be4! and Black cannot defend his king) 23 Rxe6+ Kh8 24 Bxb7 Qxb7 25 Re1 Qa6 26 Rd6 Qa4 27 Qd5, when Black's knight is embarrassingly trapped.

20 Rxd6 exd6 21 Re1 a5!

The move at which Shirov concluded his analysis. He judged that the position is unclear. 21...Ne5 22 Rxe5 dxe5 23 d6 is not something Black wants to deal with – the d-pawn is too strong.

22 Qxg5 Nf6 (Diagram 8) 23 Re7?

23 Qf4! was stronger. After 23...Ne8 24 Qa4 b5! 25 Qxb5 Nf6 26 Qc6 Ra6 27 Qa4 Bd7 28 Qc4 Rb6 the position is wildly unclear. It is not easy to predict whether White will be able to create real pressure on the kingside before Black queens his pawn.

23...a4 24 g4?

24 Qf4 a3 25 Re1 Ne8 26 Qc4 Nc7 looks pleasant for Black, but at least White is dealing with the a-pawn in some way.

24...a3 25 Qh6

Or 25 Re1 b5 followed by 26...b4 and Black wins.

25...Rf7 26 Rxf7 Kxf7 27 g5 Ne8 0-1

Black Plays 9...Nc6

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Nf3 c5 8 Rb1 0-0 9 Be2 Nc6 (Diagram 9)

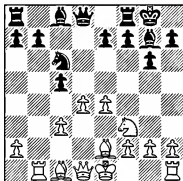


Diagram 9
Black plays 9...Nc6

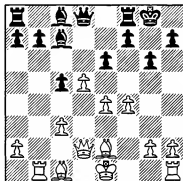


Diagram 10
The trend

This move is the norm for this structure, but here it is a bit more double-edged than usual, as White has the advance d4-d5, which is always the most desirable response to ...Nc6.

10 d5! Ne5

This is standard. At first it seems like Black can just pick up a free pawn, but this assists White's development and misplace his own pieces so much that it just isn't worth it, for example 10...Bxc3+?! 11 Bd2 Bxd2+ 12 Qxd2 Na5 13 h4 Bg4 14 h5! (an important move) 14...Bxf3 (14...Bxh5? 15 Qh6 f6 16 g4 and White wins) 15 gxf3 e5 16 hxg6 fxg6 17 d6 b6 18 Qd5+ Kg7 19 Qxe5+ Qf6 20 Qh2 h5 21 Qg3 with a clear advantage for White, Gelfand-Stohl, Tilburg 1992.

11 Nxe5 Bxe5 12 Qd2!

The white bishop belongs on b2 in most cases, but White also wants to play 13 f4. That is why this is the only relevant move here.

12...e6

Black used to play 12...b6 13 f4 Bg7, but White has experienced very good results over the last decade, and most strong players have abandoned the system as Black.

13 f4 Bc7! (Diagram 10)

This is the fashionable move, and has been for some years. Again it is a line popularised by Gavrikov after a long list of impressive victories. The old move was 13...Bg7 but after 14 c4 and hundreds of games, it seems as if White has the advantage.

Statistics

The overall score for White after 9...Nc6 is 60% (winning 44%, drawing 31% and losing 25%). However, if we go to the position after 13...Bc7, the picture is rather different. White has a score of only 49%. Statistically, this is the best line for Black in this chapter.

Theoretical?

Another reason why this line is a good suggestion for Black. The theory starts to branch at move 16 or so and is not too heavy. Compared to the lines with 10...Qa5+ below, black is not walking on the knife's edge, and does have real winning chances. Still, White is probably a bit better objectively, which is most likely the reason why it has not been played at the top level. At the highest levels it does not matter too much whether a position is hard or easy to play. But once you get lower than 2700, this starts to influence the choice of openings.

Game 20

□ Krivoshey ■ Ftacnik

Slovenia 1999

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 Nf3 Bg7 5 cxd5 Nxd5 6 e4 Nxc3 7 bxc3 c5 8 Rb1 0-0 9 Be2 Nc6 10 d5! Ne5 11 Nxe5 Bxe5 12 Qd2! e6 13 f4 Bc7! 14 0-0 exd5 15 exd5 Ba5 (Diagram 11)

This was the idea behind Black's mysteriously abandoning the long diagonal: White is prevented from playing c4 and Bb2 for a while. In the meantime Black will complete his development.

16 Ba3

This move looks dubious. It does not take many moves before one starts to wonder what the bishop is actually doing out here.

Here are two other options:

a) 16 d6 b6 and now:

a1) 17 Bf3 Bf5 18 Bxa8 Bxb1 19 Bc6 Bf5 20 Re1 Qf6 21 Bb2 Rd8 looked okay for Black in Khalifman-Mikhalevski, St Petersburg 1999, but White won an impressive endgame. The correct evaluation of this

position will have to wait until someone decides to go for it again. However, if Black dislikes this, there is nothing stopping him from improving with 17...Rb8!?

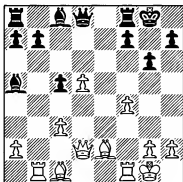


Diagram 11
A wandering bishop

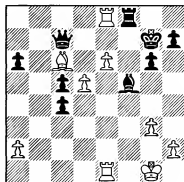


Diagram 12
A good choice

a2) 17 Bb2?! gives Black time to develop: 17...Bf5 18 Rbd1 Qf6 19 g4 (Black wins after 19 c4? Qe6, but 19 Bf3! Rae8 20 c4! with an unclear position was the right way to play according to Ftacnik; it seems that White might be a bit better) 19...Bd7 20 f5? Rae8 21 fxg6 Qxg6 22 Rf2 b5 and Black, who is about to play ...c4 burying the bishop on b2 and bringing his own to life, has a better game, Slobodjan-Avruch, Pula 2000.

b) 16 Rb3 and now:

b1) 16...b6 17 Qd3!? was played in Agrest-Aagaard, Sweden 1998. Here I should have played 17...Bf5 18 Qf3 Re8, although after 19 c4! White has a slight advantage.

b2) 16...Qd6!? 17 Qd3 Bf5 18 Qf3 c4! (this is the main idea – Black prevents White from playing c3-c4 at any price) 19 Ba3 Qc7 20 d6 Bb6+ 21 Kh1 Qc8 with unclear play (Sergey Ivanov).

16...b6 17 Bb5 Qd6!?

17...Qf6 was played previously. The idea behind 17...Qd6!? is to keep a close eye on the d-pawn, not letting it move further forward. Obviously the queen is not the best blockader in the world, but at least there are no knights to disturb it and the bishop on a3 is no threat either.

18 Rbc1 Bf5 19 Qd1

Ftacnik does not like this move, preferring 19 Rfe1 after which 19...Rad8 20 Rcd1 Bg4 21 Be2 Bxe2 22 Rxe2 Rfe8 and Black equalises. It seems that he is a bit too pessimistic about the position White gets in the game, or maybe simply too optimistic about this position. In both cases White needs to be a bit careful.

19...a6!

Black wants to exchange a rook on the e-file to ease the pressure.

19...Rad8 20 c4 would be okay for White.

20 Bc6 Ra7 21 c4?

White overvalues getting the bishop onto the long diagonal and underestimates the power of the invasion of Black's rook.

Ftacnik assesses the following line as unpleasant: 21 Qf3 Re7 22 Rfe1 Rxe1+ 23 Rxe1 Rd8. However, it's not completely clear why White should be any worse here. Black does not have an easy time attacking d5, and after a sequence such as 24 Re2 b5 25 Qe3 Bb6, White has 26 c4! bxc4 27 Bb2 f6 28 Bc3 with good compensation for the pawn. It's better to have an active bishop than an extra pawn on c3.

21...Re7 22 Bb2 Re3

It now becomes obvious that White will not be able to harm Black on the long diagonal. Also, he finds it difficult getting the rooks into play. If White tries to remove the rook on e3 with Rf3, Black can react with ...Re1+. In the long run this is something he is forced to do, but it is not a pleasurable decision to make.

23 Be5 Qd8 24 Rf3

Black wins after 24 d6? f6 25 Bb2 Rd3.

24...Re1+ 25 Qxe1 Bxe1 26 Rxe1 b5!?

Black decides to seek activity on the queenside. More relaxed would be 26...f6 27 Bb2 Qd6 28 g3 b5, but here White can create some counterplay with 29 Ra3!, after which the position is less clear.

27 Rfe3 f6 28 Bc3 bxc4 29 Re7 Qd6 30 g3 Rf7 31 Re8+ Kg7 32 Be5!?

White tries to set up practical problems for Black, but this is not enough to save the game.

32...fxe5 33 fxe5 Qc7 34 e6 Rf8! (Diagram 12)

The best practical decision. After 34...Re7? 35 Rxe7+ Qxe7 36 d6 Qxd6 37 e7 Qd4+ 38 Kh1! Black only has a draw with 38...Be4+! 39 Rxe4 Qf2 40 h3 Qf1+ 41 Kh2 Qf2+. Also after 34...Bxe6?! 35 dxe6 Re7 36 Rxe7+ Qxe7 37 Bd5 c3 38 Bb3 c4 39 Bc2 White has some chances of creating a fortress, even though Black should win.

35 e7!?

The endgame after 35 Rxf8 Kxf8 36 e7+ Qxe7 37 Rxe7 Kxe7 38 Kf2 c3 wins effortlessly for Black.

35...Rxe8 36 Bxe8 Qa5! 37 Re2

White has a passed pawn on the seventh rank that will queen, but still he cannot save the game.

37...Bd3 38 Re6

White also loses after 38 Bc6 Bxe2 39 Kf2 Qd2 40 e8Q Bd3+ 41 Kf3 Qd1+ 42 Kf4 Qf1+ 43 Ke3 Qe2+ 44 Kf4 Qf2+ 45 Kg4 Qf5+ 46 Kh4 Qh5 mate.

38...Qd2 39 Bc6 Qd1+ 40 Kf2 Qf1+ 41 Ke3 g5! 0-1

White is trapped in a mating net.

Black Plays 9...cxd4 10 cxd4 Qa5+

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Nf3 c5 8 Rb1 0-0 9 Be2 cxd4 10 cxd4 Qa5+ (Diagram 13)

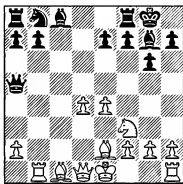


Diagram 13
The main line

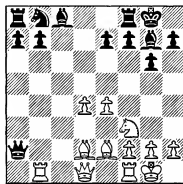


Diagram 14
A critical juncture

Finally we come to Black's most popular choice

11 Bd2

11 Qd2 Qxd2+ 12 Bxd2 is considered absolutely equal. And if anybody has a chance in the endgame it is probably Black with his two distant pawns. Still, White is active and a draw is the most likely result.

11...Qxa2 12 0-0 (Diagram 14)

White has sacrificed a pawn on a2 in order to get a strong lead in development. The reason why grabbing the pawn is not complete madness from Black's point of view is that there is no obvious point of attack: the two armies are not in a direct confrontation and Black has no weaknesses. White is banking on not only his lead in development but also the d-pawn, which often takes full control over the centre. Then there is the issue about Black's queen. It's sometimes in trouble down there, but at times it's also irritating for White, who cannot organise himself as freely as he would like.

From Diagram 14 there are an endless number of attempts for Black. We will look at 12...Nd7 in Game 21, while the main line, 12...Bg4, will be discussed in Games 22-23.

We should also briefly look at other options:

- a) 12...Qe6 is an old favourite of Gata Kamsky. After 13 Qc2 Qc6 14 Qd3 Qd6 15 Bb4 Qd8 16 d5 White is generally known to have better chances.
- b) 12...Bd7 13 Rxb7 Bc6 14 Rxe7 Qa3 15 Bg5 f6 16 Bc4+ Kh8 17 Rxb7 Kxg7 18 d5 Qc3 19 Qc1 (in one game White played 19 dxc6? and quickly lost) 19...Qxc1 20 Bxc1 with a very interesting endgame, which probably favours White. This has yet to be tested in practice.
- c) 12...a5!? is an interesting idea. The main point is simply to create counterplay with this pawn ASAP and in this way avoid problems in the centre. White's strongest continuation is probably 13 d5 a4 14 Bb4 a3 15 e5 with a very double-edged struggle. It does feel, though, as if Black is putting all his eggs into one basket – a risky strategy
- d) 12...b6 (the old main line) 13 Qc1! (generally recognised as the strongest) and now:
- d1) 13...Qe6 14 Bc4 Qxe4 15 Re1 Qb7 16 Bb4 Be6 17 Rxe6 fxe6 18 Ng5 Nd7 19 Nxe6 Kh8 20 Nxf8 Rxf8 with an unclear game, Gonzales-Perez, Havana 1992.
- d2) 13...Bb7 14 Bc4 Qa4 15 Bb5 Qa2 16 Re1 (Black of course must be ready to repeat the position) 16...Rc8 17 Qd1 Qc2 18 Qe2 Qc7 19 Rbc1 Qd8 20 Rxc8 Bxc8 with good compensation for the pawn.

Statistics

The overall statistics for this line after 10...Qa5+ are not particularly interesting. It's more relevant to give the statistics on Black's 12th move choices after 12 0-0. These are the following:

12...Bd7: 39 games; White scores 53% (38% wins, 29% draws and 33% losses)

12...Nd7: 178 games; 63 (45, 36, 19)

12...b6: 220 games; 64 (43, 41, 16)

12...Qe6: 137 games; 59 (40, 38, 22)

12...a5: 167 games; 61 (44, 34, 22)

12...Bg4: 464 games; 60 (34, 52, 14)

Theoretical?

Indeed it is. With so many options for both sides, it becomes a real effort to keep up with everything, especially when the lines are so dangerous. Theoretically they should be okay for Black, but any hopes of great success over a long period seem to be unrealistic.

Game 21

□ Shirov ■ Leko

Dortmund 1998

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Nf3 c5 8 Rb1 0-0 9 Be2 cxd4 10 cxd4 Qa5+ 11 Bd2 Qxa2 12 0-0

Nd7 13 Bb4 Nb6! 14 Ne5

The main move, but White also has other dangerous attempts:

- a) 14 h3!? (to prevent ...Bg4) 14...Bd7 15 Ra1 Qe6 16 Bd3 gave White a strong initiative for his sacrificed pawn, Gelfand-Ma.Tseitlin, Tel Aviv 1999.
- b) 14 Qd3 Be6 15 Ra1 (but not 15 d5? Nxd5! 16 exd5 Bf5 and Black won in Tukmakov-Gavrikov, Moscow 1989) 15...Qb3 is pretty unclear as well.
- c) 14 Bxe7 Re8 15 Ra1 Qe6 16 Bc5 Qxe4 17 Ne5! Bxe5 18 Bf3 Bxh2+ 19 Kxh2 Qf4+ 20 Kg1 again with compensation, Vaissier-Kozul, Ptuj 1989.

14...f6 15 Nd3!?

15 Nc4 is the main move here. After 15...Nxc4 16 Ra1 Nb2 17 Rxa2 Nxd1 18 Bc4+ Kh8 19 Rxd1 Rd8 20 Bxe7 Re8 Black's exact play has equalised, as demonstrated in some games.

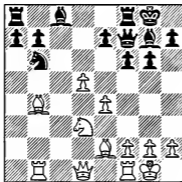
15...Qf7 16 d5 (Diagram 15)

Diagram 15
A thematic advance

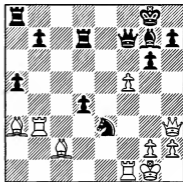


Diagram 16
Black to play and win

A new move. It is clear that White has a more natural position, but on the other hand Black has two passed pawns on the queenside, one of them supported by a rook.

16...f5 17 Nc5?

It's not obvious what made Shirov miscalculate this position. Leko thinks that a better try would have been 17 f4!? Nc4! (17...fxe4 18 Ne5 gives White an attack) 18 Qc1 b5 with a truly unclear position.

17...fxe4 18 d6 Rd8!

Maybe this is what Shirov did not anticipate. After 18...exd6 19 Nxe4 Be6 20 Nxd6 Black's queen has a problem finding a resting place.

19 Nxe4 Bf5 20 Bd3

After 20 Ng5? Qf6 21 Qb3+ e6 White has no threats at all.

20...Bxe4 21 Bxe4 exd6 22 f4?

A wrong assessment or simply hoping for 'fire on board'? White had one last chance to play for a draw with 22 Ba5 d5 23 Bf3 Rd6 24 Bxb6 axb6 25 Qd3, when the endgame might not be lost (Leko).

22...d5 23 Bc2

Leko gives the following nice line to illustrate how White attack is best stopped: 23 Bd3 Nc4 24 f5 Ne3 25 fxe6 Qxf1+! 26 Qxf1 Nxf1 27 gxh7+ Kh8 and Black wins the endgame.

23...Nc4 24 Rb3 a5 25 Ba3 d4!

Now Black has complete control over the centre and two extra pawns.

26 f5 Ne3 27 Qf3

27 Rxe3 dxe3 28 fxe6 Qf2+! is an easy win for Black.

27...Rd7 28 Qh3 (Diagram 16) 28...d3!

This concludes the game. 28...Nxf1 29 fxe6 hxe6 30 Rf3 would allow White to continue the attack.

29 Bxd3 Nxf1 30 fxe6 Bd4+ 31 Kh1 Qf2 0-1

Game 22

□ Kramnik ■ Topalov

Linares 1998

1 Nf3 Nf6 2 c4 c5 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 d4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 g6 7 e4 Bg7 8 Rb1 0-0 9 Be2 cxd4 10 cxd4 Qa5+ 11 Bd2 Qxa2 12 0-0 Bg4

This has been the main line since Ivanchuk introduced it in two games against Gelfand back in 1990. The main idea is to play against d4.

13 Be3

Or:

a) 13 Bg5 is considered in Game 23. Whether it is an advantage or a disadvantage to induce ...h7-h6 is not easy to decide.

b) 13 Rxb7 Nc6! transposes to the note to White's 16th move after 14 d5 Bxf3 15 Bxf3 Ne5 (15...Nd4!? may be even stronger) 16 Be3, while 13...Bxf3 14 Bxf3 Bxd4 15 e5! looks dangerous for Black and has indeed proven to be so in some games.

c) 13 d5!? to prevent ...Nc6 is an interesting idea, also tested in some games. 13...Nd7 14 Rxb7 Bxf3 15 Bxf3 Ne5 16 Be3 would probably be the simplest choice for Black, once again transposing to the main game.

13...Nc6 14 d5 Bxf3

14...Ne5 is considered inferior due to 15 Rxb7 Rfb8 16 Rxe7 Rb2 17 Bd4 Rxe2 18 Bxe5 Bxf3 19 gxf3 Bxe5 20 Rxe5 with a white advantage according to Curt Hansen.

15 Bxf3 Ne5

15...Na5!?! is an alternative.

16 Be2

White does not seem to have any advantage after 16 Rxb7 a5 (16...e6!?, as played in Chernin-Azmaiparashvili, Portoroz 1997 also seems to be okay) 17 Rxe7 a4 18 Bd4 Nxf3+ 19 gxf3 Bxd4 20 Qxd4 a3 21 Kg2 Qb2 22 Qxb2 axb2 23 Rb1 Rfb8 24 d6 Kf8 and Black was able to draw in Bacrot-Illescas Cordoba, Pamplona 1998.

16 Bc5 Bf6 17 Rxb7 Rfb8 18 Bxe7 Rxb7 19 Bxf6 Re8 also proved to be okay, if not better for Black in Krasenkov-Azmaiparashvili, Yerevan 1996.

16...Nc4 17 Bg5 Nd6?!

This mistake should not have been repeated. Black did all right with 17...Rfe8!?! 18 Rxb7 Nd6 19 Rb4 a5 20 Ra4 Qb2 21 Bc1 Qb6 (Sakaev-Notkin, Russia 1996), but possibly Kramnik also had something prepared for this.

18 Bxe7! (Diagram 17)

A strong novelty

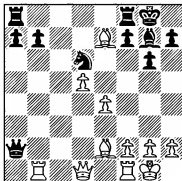


Diagram 17
Freeing the d-pawn

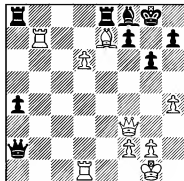


Diagram 18
An imposing d-pawn

A strong, but in some respects obvious, new move. Gelfand played 18 Bd3 against Illescas Cordoba in Dos Hermanas 1997, a game he annotated with Huzman for *Chess Informant*.

18...Nxe4 19 Bf3!

Gelfand and Huzman said nothing about this move in their annotations. Now White is able to get a strong position where his passed d-pawn is a mighty player.

19...Nd2

19...Nc3? 20 Qb3 Qxb3 21 Rxb3 Rfe8 22 d6 gives White something close to a winning position.

20 Qe2!

20 Bxf8? Kxf8! 21 Rxb7 Nxf1 does not give White any advantage.

20...Rfe8?!

20...Nxf3+ 21 Qxf3 Rfb8 22 d6 b6 gives Black more chances of equality. White should probably invade on the seventh rank with 23 Rbc1! followed by Rc7, with an interesting race ahead.

21 d6!

Top players rarely let their pieces walk around the board unprotected. After 21 Rxb7?! Black is able to use the loose rook with 21...Be5! to gain counterplay, for if 22 Qxe5? Nxf1 23 Kxf1?, then 23...Qa6+ wins.

21...Nxf3+

After 21...Qa5 22 Bxb7 Nxb1 23 Bxa8 Rxa8 24 Rxb1 Black has very few chances of surviving the endgame.

22 Qxf3 Bf8

22...Rab8 23 Rxb7 Rxb7 24 Qxb7 Bf8 gives White a clear edge after 25 Qb5! Rxe7 26 dxe7 Bxe7 27 Qe8+ Bf8 28 h4, when Black has little chance of freeing himself.

23 Rxb7 a5 24 h4

White has an undisputed advantage. His passed pawn has advanced and he has a potential attack on Black's king. There is no reason for him not to simply improve his position move by move.

24...a4

Black is playing his only trump. 24...Bxe7 brings no relief after 25 Rxe7!.

25 Rd1! (Diagram 18)

White is preparing the advance of the d-pawn and soon wins the exchange.

25...Qe6

After 25...Bxe7 26 Rxe7 Rf8 27 d7 White has a clear advantage. He has a passed pawn on the seventh rank and attacking ideas involving h5-h6. The move Qxa8! followed by Re8+ is currently a threat, while if the black queen abandons the diagonal, then Rxf7! becomes a real option.

26 Bg5! h6

What else? 26...Bxd6? 27 Rxd6! and Black is forced to resign.

27 d7 hxg5 28 dxe8Q Rxe8 29 hxg5 a3 30 g3!

White has won the exchange and has a winning position, even though a few technical obstacles remain. However, White somehow loses his concentration and lets Black escape with a draw.

30...a2 31 Kg2 Rd8! 32 Re1?

32 Ra7! Rxd1 33 Qxd1 Qe4+ 34 Qf3 Qe6 35 Qa8 (Curt Hansen) is a winning line for White.

32...Qc4 33 Ra7 Rd3!

Suddenly Black has become very active.

34 Qa8 Rd2! 35 Qf3!

35 Re3! is stronger.

35...Rd3 36 Qa8 Rd2 37 Ra4?

Again 37 Re3!.

37...Qc5 38 Rf1 Qc2 39 Ra7 Qb3 40 Qf3?

White could still have won with 40 Rc7! Qa3 41 Rc8 Qxa8+ 42 Rxa8 (Kramnik). There is no defence against Ra1xa2.

40...Qxf3+ 41 Kxf3 Bc5 42 Ra8+ Kg7 43 Ra1 Rxf2+ 44 Kg4 Rd2 45 Ra4 Bb6 46 R1xa2 Rd5 47 Kh4 Bd8 48 Rg4 Rd1 49 Rh2 Kg8 50 Re4 Rd5 51 Re8+ Kg7 52 Rb2 Bxg5+ 53 Kg4 Rd4+ 54 Kh3 Rd7 55 Rbb8 Bf6 ½-½

Game 23

□ Kramnik ■ Timman

Novgorod 1995

1 Nf3 g6 2 d4 Nf6 3 c4 Bg7 4 Nc3 d5 5 cxd5 Nxd5 6 e4 Nxc3 7 bxc3 e5 8 Rb1 0-0 9 Be2 cxd4 10 cxd4 Qa5+ 11 Bd2 Qxa2 12 0-0 Bg4 13 Bg5 h6 14 Be3

14 Bxe7? Re8 15 Rxb7 Nd7! looks good for Black, as White's centre collapses.

14...Nc6!

Pressuring d4. Also possible is, of course, 14...b6 but after 15 Ra1 Qb2 16 Qd3 Qb4 17 h3 Bxf3 18 Bxf3 e5 19 d5 White has a good game (Khenkin).

15 d5

15 Rxb7 Rab8! (15...Bxf3 16 Bxf3 Nxd4? 17 Bxd4 Rfd8 fails due to 18 Qa1!) 16 Rxb8 Rxb8 17 h3 Bd7 gives Black good counterplay with the passed a-pawn.

15...Na5

15...Ne5!? 16 Rxb7 e6, originally played by Ivanchuk against Gelfand, remains unrefuted: 17 Re1 Bxf3 18 gxf3 Rfd8 19 d6 Qa5! (with the threat of 20...Rxd6!) 20 Rf1 Bf8 21 d7 Qa2! (threatening 22...Rxd7!) 22 Re1 Qa5 23 Rf1 Qa2 24 Bb5 a6 25 Bd4 Bg7 26 Bxe5 and a draw was agreed in Kramnik-Kasparov, Linares 1998.

16 Bc5 Bf6 17 e5! (Diagram 19)

White needs to fight for the initiative in order to prove the correctness of his pawn sacrifice. Still, this was not such a brave move, as it had been played before.

17...Bxe5 18 Rb4!

Threatening g4 and Ra4. The alternative 18 h3 Rfd8!? 19 hxg4 Rxd5 20 Bd4! Bxd4 21 Nxd4 Rad8! 22 Qc2! Qxc2 23 Nxc2 Rd2 24 Rfd1 led to a very complex endgame in Strelbin-Nadanian, USSR 1991.

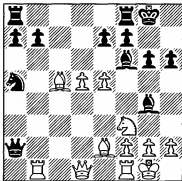


Diagram 19
Brave play?

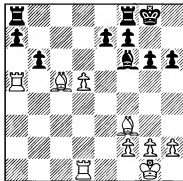


Diagram 20
White has a big hit

18...Bxf3 19 Bxf3 Bf6?

This move loses the game by force, although it was impossible to foresee the fantastic combinational and positional play by Kramnik. Stronger is 19...Rae8 20 Be3 (20 Ra4? Qb3 21 Rxa5 Qxd1 22 Rxd1 b6 and it's White who must fight for the draw) 20...Bc3 21 Ra4 Qb2 22 Qd3 b5 23 Bc1 bxa4 24 Bxb2 Bxb2 25 d6 Bf6 26 Qb5 Nb3 27 d7 Rd8 28 Rd1 Nd4 and Black was eventually able to draw in Kramnik-Anand, Riga 1995.

20 Ra4 Qb3 21 Rxa5 Qxd1 22 Rxd1 b6 (Diagram 20)

Black had based all his hopes upon this move, but now White is able to prove the real strength of the passed pawn.

23 d6!! Rac8

Sadly, this is forced. White wins at once after 23...exd6 24 Bxb6!, while Black is also lost following 23...bxa5 24 dxe7 Rfc8 25 Bxa8 Rxa8 26 Rd7!.

24 d7 Rcd8 25 Bxe7! Bxe7 26 Rxa7 Rb8 27 Re1 Bd8

27...Bf6 28 Bd5 b5 29 Re8! also gives White a winning position due to 29...Rbx8 30 dxe8Q Rxe8 31 Bxf7+.

28 Re8

Now Black is completely tied down. There is no way for him to remove the rook on e8.

28...b5 29 Ra8! Rxa8 30 Bxa8 b4 31 Bd5 Kg7 32 Kf1 1-0

There is no defence to a king march to c8, after which White wins the bishop. A truly impressive destruction of a former world championship finalist.

Chapter Four

Modern Exchange Variation: Other Lines

- The Karpov Variation: 7 Be3
- The Karpov Variation: 7 Nf3 c5 8 Be3
- Rare Exchange Lines



The Karpov Variation: 7 Be3

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Be3 (Diagram 1)

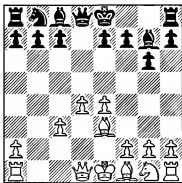


Diagram 1
The Karpov Variation

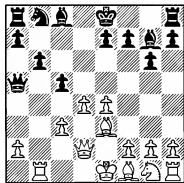


Diagram 2
Adorjan's move

This, along with 7 Nf3 c5 8 Be3 (see the next section) can be classified as the Karpov Variation. Actually, there is no real historical argument for calling this the Karpov Variation, although he did use it with some success against Kasparov in their latter matches. The real reason for the name is the association of style one would connect to such a variation: technical and restraining, aiming mainly at preventing the opportunities of the opponent. White has a big centre and more space, so he simply tries to prevent Black from creating his dynamic counterplay. In many lines this ends in an endgame where White tries to squeeze a slight advantage out of the position, which in reality should be equal.

By playing 7 Be3 White delays the development of the g1-knight in favour of trying to achieve the right set-up on the queenside as soon as possible.

7...c5 8 Qd2 Qa5 9 Rb1!?

This move was not invented, as one would have thought, after the variation had been hyped. It was actually first played in 1983 by the late chess genius Lev Polugaevsky, but as the game ended in a quick draw it did not really attract any attention. It was only around 1989 that grandmasters started playing 9 Rb1, and only in 1991 when it was elevated to the highest level, when Karpov used it in a game against Gata Kamsky, a game that set a precedent even though Black won.

The main idea behind 9 Rb1!? is to provoke Black into weakening his queenside in one way or another. It could be with 9...a6 as Kamsky

did, or with 9...Nd7 as Dolmatov did in the original game (the knight belongs to c6; from d7 it is not involved in the fight for the centre).

9...b6! (Diagram 2)

This move was invented by Andras Adorjan, a Hungarian grandmaster and an eccentric genius, who certainly has more colour than most chess players. The idea is, of course, to discourage 10 Rb5, or at least make it ineffective. It involves a pawn sacrifice, but as we shall see White is in no position to accept it. This position is discussed further in Game 24.

One might wonder what is so terrible about playing 9...a6. Well, actually it is not so dreadful. Remember that Kamsky played it and won against Karpov. Still, it is not desirable. A pawn that has gone forwards cannot go back (obviously!).



NOTE: White's main idea behind this system is to induce Black to weaken himself in some way, after which White can slowly add pressure on these weaknesses.

In the case of 9...a6, it would be the b6-square, the control of which is essential for Black due to the c5-pawn. One example of how bad things can get is the following:

9...a6 10 Rc1 (having achieved the weakness, White places the rook where it belongs, on the c-file, where if nothing else it protects the c-pawn) 10...0-0 11 d5!? (normally Black would capture on d4 at some point and play ...b5 in order to justify 9...a6; by playing d5 White keeps an eye on the c5-pawn) 11...Rd8 12 Nf3 Nc6 13 Be2 e6 14 0-0 exd5 15 exd5 Ne7 16 c4 Qxd2 17 Nxd2 Re8 18 Bf3 and it is impossible for Black to save the c-pawn, Karpov-Galli, Bastia 1998.

Statistics

The first important position is after 9 Rb1. Here White has a good score of 57% in 292 games. However, much more important are the statistics to the move which has been established as Black's best reply, 9...b6!. Here White keeps a slight plus with 51% over 150 games. It's unclear whether 9 Rb1!? is really a good move or not. After 9...b6!, played by virtually all Black players these days, it is doubtful that White is really achieving anything. More useful seems to be 9 Nf3 or 9 Rc1 cxd4!? (this gives the variation independent value; 9...0-0 is more normal, after which White has nothing better than 10 Nf3 – see the next section) 10 cxd4 Qxd2+ 11 Bxd2 (11 Kxd2!? looks more logical) 11...Nc6 12 d5 Nd4 with unclear play, as in some games.

Theoretical?

One of the main attractions/problems (depending on your viewpoint) behind the Karpov Variation is that it is impossible to analyse the lines with a computer and get a real head start on your opponent. A new move might be sprung in your face, or a line you did not know

might suddenly present itself before you. But either way, it will never be decisive. The position is way too relaxed for that.

Game 24

□ Shaked ■ Kasparov

Tilburg 1997

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Be3 c5 8 Qd2 Qa5 9 Rb1!? b6 10 Bb5+

White tries to disrupt Black's development with this move.

It might be tempting to try 10 Rb5 but practice has shown that, if it is dangerous for anybody, then it's White. Play continues 10...Qa4 and now:

a) 11 Rb3 0-0 12 Bb5 Qa5 13 Ne2 a6 14 Bd3 Nc6 15 d5 Ne5 16 0-0 f5! and Black took over the initiative in Portisch-Adorjan, Hungary 1991. 13 Nf3 would have kept the balance, but nothing more.

b) 11 dxc5?! (very reckless) and now:

b1) 11...Qxe4?! 12 Be2 is known to be bad for Black, but after 12...Ba6 13 Bf3 Qc4 this is clearly not the case. Black ends a pawn up after 14 Ne2 Bxb5 15 Bxa8 bxc5.

b2) 11...0-0! (this is even stronger) 12 Rb4 Qa5 with a final split:

b21) 13 Bc4 Nc6 14 Rb3 (or 14 Rb5 Qa4 15 Be2 Rd8 16 Qc1 Ba6 and White's position is falling apart) 14...Rd8 15 Qc1 bxc5 (15...Ne5? 16 Ra3! would be embarrassing) 16 Ra3 Qc7 17 f4 (17 Ne2 Ne5 also favours Black) 17...Bb7 and Black was on his way to a brilliant victory in Ibragimov-Toth, Dortmund 1992. Black's pieces are more or less where they should be, but White is underdeveloped and has a silly rook on a3.

b22) 13 cxb6 axb6 gives Black a clear advantage according to Adorjan. Black will develop freely and White still has three moves to make before his king reaches safety – this is very unlikely to happen. On top of all this, Fritz 8 favours 14 a4 for White. What a materialistic machine!



WARNING: Do not trust the computer's evaluation of a position!

Computers are normally like this. They have some indication of king safety in their programs, but generally they do not understand the danger as quickly as a strong human player. Instead they add up the pawns and believe they are better simply on this materialistic count. Even though the programmers have achieved much in the last few years with regard to understanding compensation, there is still a long way to go before computers reach the same level of a strong grandmaster.

10...Bd7 11 Be2

11 Bd3 is most likely stronger here, as Black has an effective counter to the text move. Still, Black has reasonable counterplay after

11...Nc6 12 Ne2 0-0 and should not be worse, as shown in a number of games.

11...Bc6!

Black disagrees with how White places his pieces. Alternatively:

a) 11...0-0 12 Rc1 Bb5 13 d5 Nd7 14 c4 Qxd2+ 15 Kxd2 Ba4 16 Nh3 e6 17 Nf4 Rae8 18 f3 with a space advantage for White, Karpov-Timman, 10th match game, Kuala Lumpur 1993.

b) 11...cxd4 12 cxd4 Nc6 13 Qxa5 Nxa5 14 Ba6 0-0 15 Ne2 Bc8 16 Bd3 Bb7 17 Kd2 Rfc8 18 Rhc1 e6 19 f3 Bf8 20 h4 Nc6 21 h5 was also slightly better for White, Yusupov-Lalic, Pula 1997.

12 Bd3

12 d5?? Bxc3 has occurred over time, in this and in similar positions.

12 f3?!, with the idea of Nh3-f2, is possible, but White can hardly be better. He will still have problems castling, as ...cxd4 and ...Qxd2 would simply cost him the d-pawn.

12...Nd7

12...0-0 13 Ne2 e6 14 h4 Nd7 15 h5 was played in Epishin-Sokolov, Biel 1993, a game won by White. This probably inspired Shaked to play his 15th move, which is less successful here.

13 Ne2 Rd8! (Diagram 3)

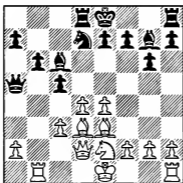


Diagram 3

13...Rd8: obvious and good

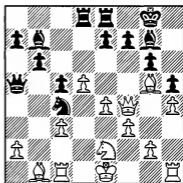


Diagram 4

Trap my queen!

This was the first new move of the game. And what a move! Later Kasparov talked about shooting sparrows with canons, unleashing this move against the at-the-time world junior champion. Besides being not very polite, this was probably also a foolish remark. It is not clear when and where Kasparov would have had this position again, and the move was so obvious that other grandmasters were probably ready to play it themselves, had they just had the chance.

The key idea behind 13...Rd8 is, of course, to prevent White from castling.

14 f3

After 14 0-0 Black has a nice resource at his disposal: 14...cxd4 15 cxd4 Qxd2 16 Bxd2 Nc5! (the real point behind ...Rd8). Still, after 17 dxc5 Rxd3 18 Be3 bxc5 19 Bxc5 White has reasonable drawing chances.

14...0-0 15 h4

This doesn't get White anywhere, and in fact the h-pawn may prove to be weak at some later moment. But what else is White to do?

a) 15 Rc1 Bb7! leaves him with the question of how to proceed. After 16 0-0 Black has ideas like 16...Ne5!? 17 dxe5 c4 18 Nd4 cxd3 19 e6 Bxd4 20 cxd4 Qxd2 21 Bxd2 Rxd4. Still, White should probably try this, following up with 22 Rc7 Bc8 23 exf7+ Kxf7 24 Rxa7, when he has drawing chances.

b) On the other hand, after 15 0-0 cxd4 16 cxd4 Qxd2 17 Bxd2 Nc5 18 Bc2 Bxd4+ 19 Nxd4 Rxd4 20 Be3 Rd7 White certainly does not have enough compensation for the pawn and can look forward for to a dreadful time in the endgame.

15...h5!

White is not allowed play on the kingside.

16 Bg5

White would probably like to run amok here, but after, for example, 16 g4? Black has a strong move that includes the queen in the defence of the kingside: 16...c4! 17 Bc2 (17 Bxc4 Ne5 and White has to give up the queen) 17...hxg4 18 h5 gxh5 19 Bh6 and now Black simply wins with 19...Ne5! Again the strength of 13...Rd8! is shown in full.

16...Rfe8

Black is in no hurry, for how is White going to get his pieces to work together? After 16...cxd4?! 17 cxd4 Qxd2+ 18 Kxd2 f6 19 Bf4 (Ftacnik) White would suddenly be better.

17 Rc1

White no longer has the option of castling. After 17 0-0 cxd4 18 cxd4 Qxd2 19 Bxd2 Nc5 20 dxc5 Rxd3 he is simply overwhelmed, for example 21 Bb4 a5 22 Be1 bxc5 23 Bxa5 Ra3 24 Bb6 Rxa2 25 Nc1 Rc2 26 Nd3 Rc3, when Black has won a pawn and will make it count in the endgame.

17...Bb7

Again a simply question: what does White do now?

18 d5?

Not a strong move, but alternatives were hard to find. Ftacnik recommends 18 0-0, after which Black maintains the advantage with 18...Ne5 19 dxe5 c4 20 Nd4 cxd3 21 e6 Ba6!. In the long run the d-pawn will be a thorn in White's side.

18...Ne5

Very uncomfortable. Black is planning to take on d3 and play ...Ba6. For this reason, White allows Black to take the c4-square.

19 Bb1 Nc4 20 Qf4?? (Diagram 4)

White finds an immediate end to his troubles. However, after something like 20 Qd1 f6 21 Bf4 e6!, his centre collapses and the game would not be saved.

20...Be5! 0-1

A fitting end to the game. All White's pieces are somehow misplaced.

The Karpov Variation: 7 Nf3 c5 8 Be3

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Nf3 c5 8 Be3 (Diagram 5)

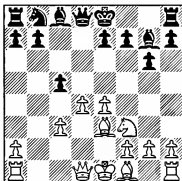


Diagram 5
A similar line

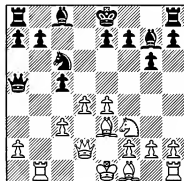


Diagram 6
A relation to 9 Rb1

This is very similar to the line discussed in the previous section.

8...Qa5 9 Qd2 Nc6

9...Bg4 is the subject of Game 26.

9...0-0 10 Rc1 is a standard position in this system. Here Black has a few options:

a) 10...e6?! 11 Bh6! Nc6 12 h4 cxd4 13 Bxg7 Kxg7 14 cxd4 Qxd2+ 15 Kxd2 Rd8 16 Ke3 gave White a better position in Karpov-Kasparov, 15th match game, Lyon 1990. Actually, this was a novelty suggested in a newspaper column the same day as the game was played.

b) 10...Rd8!? 11 d5 e6! 12 c4 Qxd2+ 13 Nxd2 b6 14 Be2 (14 Bd3 Na6 15 0-0 Nb4 16 Bb1 exd5 17 exd5 Bf5! gave Black a good game in Tunik-Alikhanov, Russia 2002) 14...Na6 (the beginning of a very original knight journey, which was discussed in *New In Chess Year-*

book 68) 15 0-0 Nb4 16 a3 Na2 17 Rc2 Nc3 and Black has strong counterplay, Stone-I.Gurevich, Chicago 1992.

c) 10...cxd4 11 cxd4 Qxd2+ 12 Nxd2 e6 13 Nb3 Rd8 is another main line, played a numerous amount of times. So many lines, so little space!

10 Rb1 (Diagram 6)

This move is related to 9 Rb1 in Game 24. Here, however, the knight is not well placed on c6, so it makes more sense. White is again hoping to induce Black into playing 10...a6 but, as seen in Game 25, Black can also choose a cool queen sacrifice, while 10...b6!? should be considered.

10 Rc1 is another possibility: 10...cxd4 11 cxd4 Qxd2+ 12 Kxd2 0-0 13 Bb5 f5! 14 exf5 Bxf5 15 Bxc6 bxc6 16 Rxc6 Rab8 is known to give Black enough compensation for the pawn and full equality. The same evaluation is given to 13 d5 Rd8 14 Ke1 Na5 15 Bg5 Bd7, as played in several games.

Statistics

The score for White after 9...Nc6 10 Rc1 is 52% over 298 games (28% wins, 49% draws and 23% losses). This score drops to 49% (22% wins, 54% draws and 24% losses) over 95 games for 9...Nc6 10 Rb1.

For this standard position after 9...0-0 10 Rc1 White has a score of 59% over 625 games. This is of course a good score, but if Black players start to embrace 10...Rd8!?, this is likely to change.

Theoretical?

No. The same comments apply here as in the previous section.

Game 25

□ Khenkin ■ Sutovsky

Polanica Zdroj 1999

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Nf3 c5 8 Be3 Qa5 9 Qd2 Nc6 10 Rb1 0-0!?

Black decides to part with his queen, a decision theory is completely in line with. Obviously, as already mentioned, this is not forced.

11 Rb5 (Diagram 7)

11...cxd4! 12 Rxa5 dxe3

Funnily enough, White cannot protect the rook as 13 Qd5 allows 13...Bxc3+.

13 Qxe3 Nxa5

Black has two bishops and the weakness of the c3-pawn to compensate for material deficit, leaving an evenly balanced position.

14 h4!?

This was Khenkin's new idea for the game. Previously White had prevented ...Be6 with 14 Nd4 Bd7 and now:

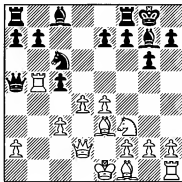


Diagram 7

Black has a radical solution

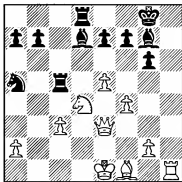


Diagram 8

Blocking the Grünfeld bishop

a) 15 Be2 Rfc8 16 0-0 Rc7! (16...e5?! 17 Nc2 Be6 18 Nb4 Nc4 19 Bxc4 Bxc4 20 Rd1 gave White a clear advantage in Vaganian-Tseshkovsky, Yerevan 1982) 17 e5?! (a double-edged move which doesn't work here as it weakens White's position; 17 f3 Rac8 18 Rc1 Nc4 is only slightly better for Black according to Adorjan and Feher) 17...e6 18 Bb5 Nc4 19 Bxc4 Rxc4 20 Rd1 Rac8 21 Ne2 Bc6 with a clear edge for Black, Ikonnikov-Adorjan, Uebach (rapid) 1996.

b) 15 e5 Rfc8 16 f4 e6 17 Be2 Rc7 18 0-0 Rac8 19 Qd2 Bf8 20 Rf3?! Nc4 21 Bxc4 Rxc4 and Black was fine in Dautov-Alterman, Bad Homberg 1997. However, White could have claimed a slight edge with 20 Nb3 according to Alterman. He suggests 16...Rc7!? as an improvement, giving 17 Nb5 Bxb5 18 Bxb5 e6 19 Ke2 Bf8 20 Rd1 b6 21 Ba6 Nb7 as equal.

14...Bg4?!

Black does not take White's plan too seriously, which is probably a mistake. It seems that Black should not hesitate to play 14...h5, even though White now has full control over the g5-square and the weaknesses on the kingside are worse for Black than for White.

In Khenkin-Naumann, Bad Wiessee 2002, Black came up with a more radical solution when facing 14 h4. Play continued 14...Be6!? 15 Ng5! Bxa2 (the a-pawn gives strong counterplay) 16 h5 Rfc8 17 e5 h6 18 Nf3 g5 19 Nxc5!? (it's very dangerous to accept this sacrifice, so Black decides to introduce his worst placed piece) 19...Nc4! 20 Bxc4 Bxc4 21 Rh3 (21 Nf3 seems more natural) 21...a5? (this is too careless; White cannot break through after 21...hxg5 22 h6 Bf8 23 Qxg5+ Kh7 24 Rg3 Bxh6 25 Rh3, as Black has an extra resource in 25...Rc6!) 22 Rg3. Here the players agreed a draw, although it seems as if White finally

has a strong attack after 22...Kh8 23 Qf4!, or 22...Rc6 23 Nf3 Kh8 24 Nd4 Rca6 25 Nf5 Bf8 26 Qd4.

15 Nd4 Rac8 16 h5! Rfd8

16...Bxh5 17 f3, followed by g4, would be very uncomfortable for Black.

17 f3 Bd7

17...e5? 18 Nb5 Be6 19 Nxa7 (Khenkin) simply loses a pawn.

18 hxg6 hxg6 19 e5!

It is important to close off the g7-bishop before continuing with plans on the kingside.

19...Rc5 20 f4 (Diagram 8)

The exchange of the h-pawns makes a big difference. Black cannot activate the g7-bishop and this was meant to be his trump card in this line. 14 h4! was the beginning of a really a deep idea. Really impressive!

20...Rdc8 21 Kd2 Rc4

This simply allows White to get his king to b2, where it is better placed, although White has an even better option. 21...Nc4+ was probably stronger.

22 Kc2

Khenkin gives 22 Qf3! R4c5 23 Bd3 Nc6 24 Qf2 Ra5 25 Bb1 with a clear advantage: Black has no counterplay.

22...Ra4 23 Kb2 Nc4+?!

23...b5!? was better.

24 Bxc4 Raxc4 25 Rd1

White can leave the kingside, but Black cannot. Mate would come like a thief in the night, before Black would be able to react.

25...Ba4

25...e6 26 Nf5! favours White.

26 Nb3 Bc6 27 g3 e6 28 Rd4!

Krasenkow intelligently observes, 'Black lacks just one tempo – with his bishop already on d5 he could play 28...R4c7 with sufficient counterplay. With one rook his prospects are not so glowing. Besides, Black starts a series of weak moves.'

28...Rxd4 29 Nxd4 Bd5?!

Now the knight comes to d6, which is probably decisive.

30 Nb5 Bf8?

Black tries to obtain counterplay by giving away the a-pawn, but there is nothing. 30...a6 was necessary.

31 Nd6!

White is no hurry to take on a7, as Black cannot really capture on d6.

31...Rc6 32 Qxa7 Ra6 33 Qb8 Rxa2+ 34 Kb1 Rh2

Otherwise Black cannot defend f7. However, now the rook becomes very misplaced and White can improve his situation on the queenside in peace.

35 Qc7 Rh7 36 c4 Bf3 37 Kb2

White brings the king into the game and wins without much effort.

37...Rh2+ 38 Kc3 Rh7 39 Kd4

39 Nxb7?? f5 is not what White is looking for!

39...Bg2 40 Qc8 Rh1 41 Qd7! Rd1+ 42 Kc5 Bxd6+ 43 exd6 Bc6 44 Qe7 Kg7 45 g4 Rd3 46 g5 Kg8 47 Qd8+ Kg7 48 Kb6 1-0

White wins after a sequence such as 48...Kh7 49 Kc7 Kg7 50 d7 Rxd7+ 51 Qxd7 Bxd7 52 Kxd7 b6 53 Kc7 f6 54 gxf6+ Kxf6 55 Kxb6, when the c-pawn races to promotion.

Game 26

□ Kramnik ■ Kasparov

London (2nd match game) 2000

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 exd5 Nxd5 5 e4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Nf3 c5 8 Be3!

Up to this point Kramnik had played 8 Rb1 with some consistency, but here he had a different weapon prepared and an important novelty up his sleeve.

8...Qa5

A famous inaccuracy is 8...Nc6?! 9 Rc1 and Black has an unpleasant choice:

a) 9...Qa5 10 d5! Bxc3+? 11 Rxc3 Qxc3+ 12 Bd2 clearly favours White. One example is 12...Qf6 13 dxc6 Qxc6 14 Qc2 0-0 15 Ne5 Qc7 16 Qc3 f6 17 Bc4+ Kg7 18 Qe3 g5 19 Nd3 b6 20 h4 h6 21 hxg5 hxg5 22 Bc3 1-0 Hjartarson-Kristjansson, Reykjavik 1981.

b) 9...cxd4 10 cxd4 Qa5+ 11 Bd2 Qxa2 12 d5 and Black is under attack – not a very pleasant position to be in.

9 Qd2 Bg4?!

Kasparov had played this before, but after this game it has been completely buried. It's better to castle immediately.



NOTE: Generally Black should castle at his first opportunity in most lines of the Grünfeld. The ...c5 thrust exposes his king to unpleasantness from the queenside.

10 Rb1!

With the standard threat of Rb5; White should not miss the chance to hit the b-pawn, which is now unprotected. Previously it was thought that White could not take on b7 because his centre would collapse. This is of course correct, but who is better then? Kramnik found an interesting reply to this question.

10...a6

It might seem that Black should hurry to go into an endgame here, but there is really no pleasant solution:

a) 10...b6 11 Bb5+ Nd7 12 Ng5!? h6 13 f3! with an attack is suggested by star commentator Igor Stohl.

b) 10...Bxf3 11 gxf3 cxd4 12 cxd4 Qxd2+ 13 Kxd2 and it is still not easy for Black to develop. 13...b6 is met with 14 Bb5+ with advantage, and after 13...Nc6 14 d5 0-0-0 White came up with a wonderful combination in Rivas Pastor-Georgiev, Plovdiv 1984: 15 Ba6!! (Diagram 9)

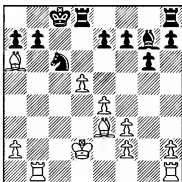


Diagram 9
Stunning!

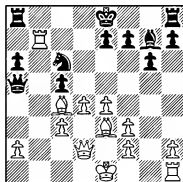


Diagram 10
Playing with the bishops

After this Black's position simply falls apart: 15...bxa6 16 Rhc1 Rd6 17 Ke2 Kc7 18 Bc5! Kd7 19 Rb7+ Kc8 20 Bxd6 Kxb7 21 dxc6+ Kb6 22 Bxe7, when White has won a pawn and also has a positional advantage.

11 Rxb7!

A new and strong move at the time. Previously only the awkward 11 Rb3?! had been played.

11...Bxf3

11...Nc6 12 Bc4 is most likely to transpose.

12 gxf3 Nc6 13 Bc4!! (Diagram 10)

White is doing absolutely nothing to keep his extra pawn or his centre together. It is more important that he has the two bishops and a well placed rook on the seventh rank.

13...0-0

After 13...cxd4 14 cxd4 Qxd2+ 15 Kxd2 Nxd4 16 f4 Black has an interesting trick in 16...Nf5!?, with the idea of 17 exf5? 0-0-0+!! However, after 17 Rb6 Nxe3 18 fxe3 White has a crystal-clear advantage. The opposite-coloured bishops do not help Black much.

TIP: With the rooks on the board, opposite-coloured bishops are



less of a draw factor than many believe. And with knights on as well, the draw factor diminishes even more.

14 0-0

White completes his development. He cannot hold on to the pawn, Stohl giving the following line: 14 Bd5 Rac8 15 Bxc6 Rxc6 16 0-0 cxd4 17 cxd4 Qxd2 18 Bxd2 Bxd4 19 Rxe7 Rc2 with a likely draw.

14...cxd4 15 cxd4 Bxd4!

This is best: the rook on b7 conveniently hangs after 16 Qxa5 Nxa5.

After 15...Qxd2 16 Bxd2 Nxd4 17 Kg2 Rfc8 18 Rc1 e6 White has the advantage on the queenside. However, 19 Bxa6?! Rxc1 20 Bxc1 Bf8! does not work, as 21 Bc4? Rc8 wins for Black.

15...Qh5? 16 Bd5 Qxf3 17 Qd1! would give White a winning endgame with no worries. A strong centre, two bishops and that wonderfully placed rook.

16 Bd5!

Kramnik, still in his opening analysis, played this move quickly.

16...Bc3?!

16...Qxd2 17 Bxd2 Rfc8 was better, after which Black can still fight for equality. 16...Bxe3?! 17 Qxe3, on the other hand, is horrible. White wins after 17...Nb4 18 Qc3 e6 19 Bxe6 Qg5+ 20 Kh1; he is a pawn ahead and f7 is weak.

17 Qc1!

It is all about the dark squares here. Stohl gives the following elegant line: 17 Qc2?! Rac8! 18 Bxc6 Rxc6 19 Rxe7 Qh5 20 Qd1 g5! 21 f4 Qh3 22 Qe2 (22 f4g5 Rc7!! 23 Qd6 [23 Rxc7 Be5! and Black is even better!]) 2Qg4+ with a draw) 22...Bf6 23 Rb7 Rc2! 24 Qxc2 Qg4+ with perpetual check.

17...Nd4

Now 17...Rac8 is met by 18 Bb6! Qb4 19 a3 Qb2 20 Qxb2 Bxb2 21 a4 with a sad endgame for Black.

18 Bxd4

White enters a position with opposite-coloured bishops and an extra pawn. Black has drawing chances, but f7 is weak and it is not really easy to get his pieces playing. So practically it is quite uncomfortable for Black.

However, it's mainly a psychological factor that decides this game. Kasparov is well known for his good understanding of opening play and for his deep preparation. But because of this he is not very used to defending. This can also be seen in the games he has lost to Karpov and other players over time. When Kasparov is in trouble, he usually tries to solve his problems with complications. When there are no complications, suddenly his task becomes difficult.

18...Bxd4 19 Rxe7 Ra7!

Eliminating the rook from the seventh rank.

20 Rxa7 Bxa7 21 f4

In endings with opposite-coloured bishops, the attacker will often try to dominate the opponent's bishop by putting his pawns on the same colour of that bishop (the dark squares on this occasion).

21...Qd8 22 Qc3 Bb8 23 Qf3!

White is ready for Black's attempt at controlling the dark squares.

23...Qh4 24 e5 g5

Black had hoped that this would have been enough to eliminate White's control over the dark squares. But White is well prepared.

25 Re1! Qxf4

25...gxf4 26 e6 fxe6 27 Rxe6 would give White an attack against the king.



NOTE: Positions with opposite-coloured bishops give the attacker some extra opportunities, as he controls one colour of the board completely.

26 Qxf4 gxf4 27 e6 fxe6 28 Rxe6 (Diagram 11)

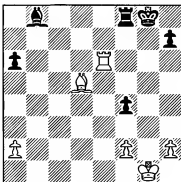


Diagram 11
Difficult for Black

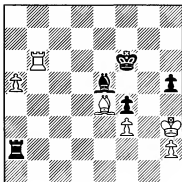


Diagram 12
Black to play and blunder

White now remains a pawn up and is forever better in this endgame. A very uncomfortable situation for Black, and a very uncommon situation for Kasparov.

28...Kg7 29 Rxa6 Rf5 30 Be4 Re5?!

It is questionable whether Black really wants to force White to play f3, and a tempo could make a lot of difference in this kind of endgame. Sometimes Black can play ...f3 himself to force exchanges or to attack f2. 30...Rb5 31 a4 Rb2 32 a5 Be5 is more active.

31 f3 Re7

Stohl thinks that 31...Rb5! was better and more active. He is probably right.

32 a4 Ra7?!

32...Ba7+ 33 Kg2 Be3 was stronger, but Black had made a miscalculation.

33 Rb6

White needs the rooks on to be able to play for a win. After 33 Rxa7+? Bxa7+ 34 Kg2 Bb6 35 Kh3 h5 36 Kg2 Kf6 37 Kf1 Ke5 38 Bg6 h4 39 Kg2 Bd8 he will never be able to improve, as Black's king will simply block White's off.

33...Be5 34 Rb4 Rd7

After 34...Bd6 35 Rc4 Rc7 36 Bc6! White keeps up the pressure. The a-pawn is threatening to advance and Black must move his rook back to the passive a7-square a7. Stohl writes that Kasparov had allegedly overlooked that he could not force a trade of rooks.

35 Kg2!

White should not hurry. After 35 a5? Bc3 36 Ra4 Rd1+ 37 Kg2 Ra1! Black manages to draw.

35...Rd2+ 36 Kh3 h5 37 Rb5 Kf6 38 a5 Ra2 39 Rb6+ (Diagram 12) 39...Ke7?

A time trouble blunder; now White wins directly. Although White has made substantial progress in the preceding moves, there is still no forced win after 39...Kg7 40 a6 Bd4 41 Rg6+ Kf8 (41...Kf7?? 42 Rd6 Ra4 43 Rxd4 and White wins) 42 Re6 Ra5, when it is still not clear how White progresses.

40 Bd5 1-0

Black resigned. After 40...Rxa5 41 Re6+ Kd7 42 Rxe5 Kd6 43 Rxh5 Rxd5 44 Rxd5+ Kxd5 45 Kg4 or 40...Re2 41 Re6+ Kd7 42 a6 White wins easily.

Rare Exchange Lines

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 (Diagram 13)

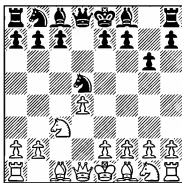
The Grünfeld structure arising after three moves is a system in its own right, just like the Nimzo-Indian, the Queen's Gambit Declined and the King's Indian. White has a large number of opportunities, just as he has against these other main defences against 1 d4. In this section we shall look through some of the minor lines after 4 cxd5 Nxd5.

5 e4

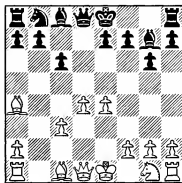
There are several ways that White can delay or completely ignore the possibility of the knight exchange:

a) The idea behind 5 Bd2!? is obviously to recapture on c3 with the bishop. A typical reaction is 5...Bg7 6 e4 (6 Nf3 0-0 7 Rc1 is also a line,

which can arise through many transpositions) 6...Nb6 7 Be3 0-0 8 Be2 Nc6 9 d5 Ne5 10 Bd4 c5 11 Bxc5 Nec4 12 Bxc4 Nxc4 13 Qb3 Nxb2 14 Qxb2 Qc7 15 Bb4 a5 16 Nge2 axb4 17 Qxb4 Bg4 18 f3 Bd7 19 0-0 b5 and Black had good compensation for the pawn, Kacheishvili-Svidler, Szeged 1994.


Diagram 13

White has many options


Diagram 14

The c-pawn is pinned

b) 5 Nf3 Bg7 6 Qb3 is a sideline that was once suggested by Raymond Keene in a repertoire book. It is rather harmless and a good example of how well things can go for Black is the following: 6...Nb6 7 Bf4 0-0 8 Rd1 c6 9 e4 Bg4 10 a4 a5 11 d5 cxd5 12 Nxd5 Nxd5 13 exd5 Na6 14 Bxa6 Rxa6 15 Be3 Qd7 16 0-0 Bxf3 17 gxf3 Rf6!! (a brilliant rook manoeuvre; the rook is excellent on f5, where it is hits the weaknesses in White's position) 18 Kg2 Rf5 19 h3 Rd8 and Black was on his way to a full point in Speelman-Ivanchuk, New York 1995.

c) 5 Na4?! was most likely inspired by a line in the a3 Queen's Indian in which White plays Na4 in order to push the d5-knight away with e4 without leaving it with a good retreat square. 5 Na4 hasn't fared well for White, but at least it gives some romantics an idea that they are violating the rules of chess. And of course they are in some way, but it is not really that important. The knight is not well placed on a4, but it can hardly be expected that this could have decisive effect on the result of the game. However, it's quite obvious that White has better moves than this. See Game 28 for more details.

5...Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Bb5+

This line is connected with Kramnik, who played it with some success.

7 Qa4!?! has also been tested. It's popularity was short lived and probably all legal moves except 7...b5?!, 7...Nc6?? and 7...Kf8? should be okay for Black. Probably the best move is 7...Nd7!.

Another rather insignificant sideline is 7 Ba3, when Black should be able to equalise in many ways. *ECO* gives 7...b6 8 Bc4 Bb7 9 Qf3 0-0 10 Ne2 c5 11 0-0 Nc6 and Black is fine.

7...c6!

7...Bd7 was the old move, the reason why White players were inspired to play this line at all. Now the pros and cons of this move have long been forgotten. The point is that after 8 Be2 c5 9 Nf3 the bishop is less well placed on d7 because there is no attack on d4 and b7 is hanging.

8 Ba4 (Diagram 14)

Otherwise the check does not make any sense. White prevents Black from playing ...c5 in one go, and in some situations the bishop can capture after ...Nc6. This position is discussed in Game 27.

Statistics

7 Bb5+ c6 8 Ba4: White has an acceptable score of 56% over 776 games, winning 38% of the games, losing 25% and drawing in 37%. This is clearly the most popular system in this section.

7 Qa4+: White scores 56% over 177 games (36% wins, 40% draws and 24% losses).

7 Ba3: White has a negative score with only 49% based on 139 games.

5 Na4: After 5...e5 6 dxe5 Nc6 (see Game 28) White scores only 40% in 10 games (1 win, 6 draws and 3 losses). Certainly a terrible score, though the material is too limited to tell us anything definitive.

5 Nf3 Bg7 6 Bd2: White scores a modest 51%.

5 Nf3 Bg7 6 Qb3: White has a moderate success with 53%.

5 Bd2: White has an overall score of 59% over 655 games, so this is a fairly popular sideline. However, if we look at the games between top players, the line holds little popularity and the statistics are more or less reversed.

Theoretical?

7 Bb5+: Definitely. I think that the notes to Game 27 are a good start, and for the normal club player, it should be enough to pick up the ideas here. For higher levels, however, a deeper study is required.

7 Qa4+: Not really. Look up a line that suits or just reply 7...Nd7 and feel good about yourself.

5 Na4: Not really. If you follow the ideas and plans laid out by Shirov in Game 28, you should be okay.

Game 27

□ Sokolov ■ Timman

Malmö 1997

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Bb5+ c6! 8 Ba4 b5

This is the main line and the move that eventually ended the popularity of 7 Bb5+. Other options start with 8...0-0 9 Ne2 and now:

- a) 9...e5 10 0-0 Qe7 11 Bc2 Be6 12 a4 with a slight advantage for White according to the *ECO*. It seems that in practice this system seems a bit dangerous for Black.
- b) 9...Be6 10 0-0 Qa5 11 Bb3 Bxb3 12 Qxb3 Qa6 13 Re1 c5 14 Rb1 Nc6 (Dao-Atalik, Wijk An Zee 1997) is equal according to *ECO*.
- c) 9...c5 10 0-0 Nc6 is considered as equal by *ECO*, supported by games like the following: 11 Be3 Na5 12 dxc5 Nc4! 13 Qxd8 Rxd8 14 Bg5 Bd7! 15 Bb3 Na5 (if Black has time to protect e7, then c5 will fall and c3 be weak; therefore White has to accept the forced lines) 16 Bxe7! Re8 17 Bd6 Rxe4 18 Nd4 Nxb3 19 axb3 Bxd4 and a draw was agreed in Topalov-Kasparov, Linares 1998.

9 Bb3 b4

9...a5!? has also been tried.

10 Qf3 0-0 11 h4

The absence of a black knight from the kingside makes this the most promising strategy for White. Even so, Black should be able to meet it sufficiently.

11...bxc3 12 Ne2 h5!

This looks like the obvious move, and none of the alternatives has fared well:

- a) 12...c5?! (too careless) 13 h5 cxd4 14 hxg6 e6 (14...hxg6 15 Qg3 d3 16 Qxg6 and White wins) 15 Qh5! fxg6 16 Qxh7+ Kf7 17 Bh6 with a winning attack, Groszpete-Horvath, Hungary 1992.
- b) 12...Qd7?! (too strange) 13 Ba3 a5 14 Rd1 Na6 15 h5 with better chances for White, Gyimesi-Piip, Szombathely 1993.
- c) 12...Ba6!? (too dangerous?) 13 h5 Bxe2 14 Kxe2 Qxd4 15 hxg6 hxg6 16 Qh3 Qxe4+ 17 Kf1 g5 (17...Rd8 18 Qh7+ Kf8 19 Bh6 and White wins) 18 Bxg5 Rd8? (Szabolcsi-Kaposztas, Hungary 1993). Now White could have won directly with 19 Re1!, when there is no defence: 19...Qd3+ 20 Qxd3 Rxd3 21 Rxe7 Nd7 22 Bxf7+ Kf8 23 Bb3 c2 24 Rf7+ Ke8 25 Ke2 and it is all over. Instead of 18...Rd8, 18...e6! is necessary. Even so, the plan of Rc1xc3-g3 looks dangerous.

13 Qxc3 Bb7 14 0-0!?

White has something to prove here. All other moves, including 14 Rb1, 14 Bg5 and 14 e5, have at best led to a draw.

14...c5!

Black rids himself of his weak pawn. The opening has been a successful experience, but now the middlegame is waiting.

15 Qxc5 Bxe4 16 Bg5 Nd7! (Diagram 15)

Strong development with tempo. 16...Nc6?! would be wrong due to 17 Rae1!, when the e4-bishop is clearly in trouble and e7 is very soft.

17 Qa3

White must not fall into temptation. After 17 Qxe7? Qxe7 18 Bxe7 Rfe8 19 Bd6 Bd3 Black wins the exchange.

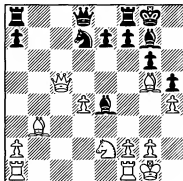


Diagram 15
Is e7 en prise?

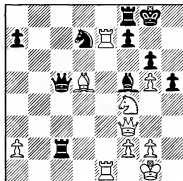


Diagram 16
Black is in surgery

17...Bf6?!

This seems a bit artificial. Ftacnik correctly suggests 17...Nf6!? 18 Rfe1 e6!, with roughly even chances.

18 Rfe1

Now White takes over the initiative.

18...Bxg5 19 hxg5 e6 20 Nf4 Bf5

The only move. After 20...Bb7? 21 Rxe6! Black is busted.

21 d5!

The weakest spot in Black's position is f7, so White opens a road down to it.

21...exd5?!

After this Black comes under heavy attack. Stronger was 21...Qxg5!, when White has nothing better than 22 Nxe6 fxe6 23 dxe6 Kh8 24 exd7 Bxd7 25 Qe7 Qxe7 26 Rxe7 Bf5 27 Rc1. Here Black is under some pressure but can defend after 27...Rfe8!, not allowing White to establish the deadly rook duo on the seventh rank.

22 Bxd5 Rc8 23 Re! Qb6?

The losing mistake. Black had a last shot at a defence with 23...Rc3!. White is much better after 24 Qd6! Qc7 25 Qxc7 Rxc7 26 Rae1 but still has to find a way to break through.

24 Rae1

Bringing in the last canon.

24...Rc2 25 Qf3

Hinting at Nxh5.

25...Qc5 (Diagram 16) 26 Rxd7!

All chances of a defence are surgically removed from Black's position.

26...Bxd7 27 Nxg6 Qc3

Black is defenceless. He loses after both 27...Bg4 28 Qf6 and 27...Rc1 28 Qf6 Rxe1+ 29 Kh2 Kh7 30 Nxf8+ Qxf8 31 g6+.

28 Qxh5 1-0

Following 28...Re8 29 Ne7+! Rxe7 30 Rxe7 Qa1+ 31 Kh2 Rxf2 32 Rxf7 Black will be mated.

Game 28

□ Lputian ■ Shirov

Montecatini Terme 2000

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 Na4?! e5!

Black quite correctly pushes in the centre and takes over the initiative. This is certainly enough for equality, but hardly enough for advantage for Black. Even so, an immediate equality is always a nice thing to get from the opening as Black.

Other moves like 5...Nf6!? and 5...Bf5!? are also okay, but the text move is more principled and, more importantly, has proven to give Black an easy life.

6 dxe5 Nc6!

Of course Black should just develop his pieces; he can always regain the pawn at a later date. When 5 Na4 first came out, Black often went for the attractive tactic 6...Bb4+ 7 Bd2 Ne3!? 8 fxe3 Bxd2+ 9 Qxd2 Qh4+ 10 g3 Qxa4 11 Qd4 Qa5+ 12 b4 Qa3 with an unclear position, as played in many games. But good looks are not everything, and this position is not the critical test of White's idea.

7 Nf3

White has tried some other options here, but none of them looks really comforting:

- After 7 a3 Bf5 8 Nf3 Qd7 9 e3 0-0-0 10 Be2 Qe7 11 Qb3 Bg7 Black had the initiative in Kanstler-Avruch, Israel 1999.
- 7 Bd2 does not prevent a knight from coming to b4, so Black gets an improved version of 7 a3: 7...Bf5 8 Rc1 Qd7 9 Nf3 0-0-0 10 a3 Qe8 11 e3 Nxe5 12 Nxe5 Qxe5 13 Be2 Bd6 14 Qb3 Rhe8 and Black has better chances, Rukavina-Mikhalchishin, Nova Gorica 1999.
- 7 e4 Bb4+ 8 Bd2 Bg4! 9 Be2 Bxe2 10 Kxe2!? (Krasenkow) needs further investigation, but 7...Ndb4! looks stronger.

7...Ndb4!? (Diagram 17)

7...Bb4+ 8 Bd2 Bg4 9 Bxb4 Ndx4 with equality has been suggested by Zaitsev.

8 Bg5

8 Qxd8+!? Nxd8 9 Kd1 is met with 9...Be6! 10 Nc3 Ndc6 when 'Black is certainly okay' – Krasenkow.

8...Qxd1+ 9 Kxd1 Be6 10 Nc3 Bg7 11 a3

11 Bf6 Bxf6 12 exf6 0-0-0+ 13 Kc1 Rhe8 gives Black a strong attack.

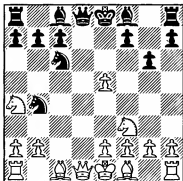


Diagram 17
A trade of ladies?

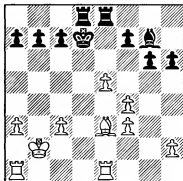


Diagram 18
The monarch heads for f5

11...Nd5 12 e4 Nxc3+ 13 bxc3 Nxe5

Black wins his pawn back. Now he has a better pawn structure and also a lead in development. Overall his chances are excellent.

14 Nxe5 Bxe5 15 Kc2 h6 16 Be3 0-0-0 17 f4 Bg7 18 Be2 Rhe8 19 Rhe1 Bd7 20 Bf3 Ba4+ 21 Kb2 Bc6 22 e5 Bxf3 23 gxf3 Kd7! (Diagram 18)

The king is aiming for the ideal square on f5.

24 h4 Ke6?!

Black should not allow White to rid himself of the h-pawn, even if it gives Black a passed pawn. Stronger must be 24...h5!. Now White can consider desperate ideas like Rg1-g5 followed by f5, but this does not work due to ...Bg7-f8-e7 with a clear advantage.

25 h5 Kf5 26 Kc2 g5?!

The beginning of exchanges White could only pray for. Krasenkow suggests 26...Bf8 as a preferable alternative.

27 Rg1!

A strong move, cleaning up the kingside pawns.

27...gxf4 28 Bxf4 Bxe5 29 Bxh6 Bf6 30 Rad1 Rxd1 31 Rxd1 Rh8 32 Be3 Rxh5

Black has won a pawn, but White easily regains it and neutralises Black's advantage.

33 Rd7 Be5 34 Rxf7+ Ke6 35 Rf8 Bd6 36 Ra8 a5 37 a4 b6 38 Re8+ Kd5 39 Re4 Rh3 40 Bf4 Rxf3 41 Rd4+ Kc5 42 Bxd6+ cxd6 43 Kb3 d5 44 Rh4 ½-½

The Russian Variation

- Introduction
- The Hungarian Variation: 7...a6
- The Prins Variation: 7...Na6
- The Smyslov Variation: 7...Bg4
- Black Plays 7...Nc6



Introduction

In this chapter we shall deal with the most positional approach to the Grünfeld Defence and also one of the most popular over time. It was the main choice of such players as Smyslov and Botvinnik in the middle of the last century, and more recently it has been played many times by Karpov, Piket and Bareev, and occasionally also by Kasparov, Anand and Topalov.

The key position arises after 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 Nf3 Bg7 5 Qb3 dxc4 6 Qxc4 0-0 7 e4 (Diagram 1)

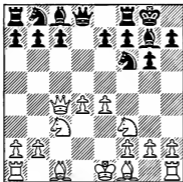


Diagram 1
The Russian Variation

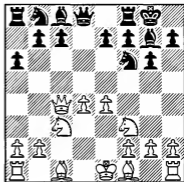


Diagram 2
The Hungarian Variation

This position is truly played in the real spirit of the Grünfeld Defence. White has an overwhelming presence in the centre, but one should not be blind to Black's lead in development. White has two knights and the queen out, but Black has developed knight and bishop, and has also castled. White is a couple of moves from castling kingside, and this gives Black some time to create a structure that suits him.



WARNING: Moving the queen early in the game is not necessarily a real improvement of the development, as the opponent can attack the queen and thereby gain time.

White has a strong occupancy in the centre, but the concept of the Grünfeld is that this is challenged and seen as a weakness as well as a strength. With his slight lead in development, Black is able to provoke weaknesses in White's structure. This can be achieved in many ways, all recognised as fine by modern opening theory.



NOTE: Because of his lead in development, Black often has time to exert a real influence in the centre before White has finished his development.

The Hungarian Variation 7...a6

1 d4 Nf6 2 Nf3 g6 3 c4 Bg7 4 Nc3 d5 5 Qb3 dxc4 6 Qxc4 0-0 7 e4 a6 (Diagram 2)

In this modern age 7...a6 is the main move. This is championed more than anyone by the Hungarian GM Peter Leko, who has used it for many years. Before him his trainer Andras Adorjan, about whom I talked earlier, mainly played it. It is interesting how two so different people and chess players can be attracted and over time become devoted to the same opening, for do we not play the moves that satisfy our inner personality? Some people have said that Leko is the only grandmaster who is completely free of style and, more than anything, plays according to the position. Whatever the reasons for their devotion to 7...a6, there is no doubt why it has been named the Hungarian Variation.

White has two main methods of playing against the Hungarian system. The first, starting with 8 Be2, is simply to develop and plan a2-a4 to exploit the loose bishop on b7. Here it is important that Black immediately creates counterplay against White's centre. This line is studied in Game 29. The second method is a frontal attack on the kingside starting with 8 e5 and including the aggressive move h2-h4. See Game 30 for this approach.

Before moving on to the main lines, let's briefly consider two alternatives for White.

a) 8 Qb3!? is a prophylactic move. Now 8...b5 does not come with tempo and White can time his reply as he pleases. In many games Black has tried the more provocative 8...c5!? 9 dxc5. Now Black has two choices:

a1) 9...Nbd7 is best met with 10 c6!?, returning the pawn in order to create a slight weakness in Black's pawn structure. This move is not very ambitious, but it also involves no risk and probably gives a White a slight advantage in practical play.



TIP: Often it is easier to play with a positional advantage than with a material advantage.

a2) 9...Qa5 10 Qb6 Qxb6 11 cxb6 Nbd7 12 Be2. White cannot keep the pawn, so he simply develops. There should be more than one way for White to gain a slight pull, as he is a little bit ahead in development. It will take some time before Black gets c8-bishop into play (first he must regain his pawn) and by then White will have already found the open files. Black should have excellent drawing chances in this position, but it is likely that most players who choose to play the Grünfeld do so because they like sharp play with good winning chances, not defending slightly worse endings. One example is 12...Nxb6 13 Be3 Nbd7 14 Nd4!? Nc5 15 f3 e5 16 Nc6 bxc6! (16...Ne6?! 17 Nxe5 Nxe4 18 Nxc6! Nxc3 19 Nxf8 Kxf8 20 bxc3 Bxc3+ 21 Kf2 Bxa1 22 Rxa1 and

White has the two bishops in an open position and a much better pawn structure) 17 Bxc5 Rd8 18 Kf2 Be6 19 Rhd1 and White has a slight but permanent advantage, Kasparov-Leko, Frankfurt (rapid) 2000.

However, all that Black players really need to know is that 8...b5 is still perfectly possible. There is no good independent way for White to use the free move. The most obvious try would be 9 a4, but this would be playing into Black's hands, simply transposing to note 'b'.

b) 8 a4?! b5! 9 Qb3 c5!? (Diagram 3)

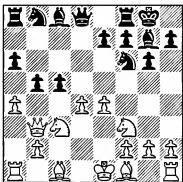


Diagram 3
Fearless play

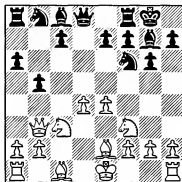


Diagram 4
White plays solidly

Black takes over the initiative. White has problems with his development and the position of his queen, and this justifies Black's boldness. Play continues 10 dxc5 Be6 and here White has the following options:

b1) 11 Qc2 b4 12 Nd1 b3 13 Qd3 Nc6 gives Black good play, although there is nothing concrete. White's best try (according to Fritz 8) is 14 Bd2 to prevent ...Nb4, when Black has 14...Qxd3 15 Bxd3 Rfd8 16 Ke2 Bg4 with strong pressure for the pawn.

b2) 11 Qa3 b4! (a neat combination) 12 Qxb4 Nc6 13 Qa3? Rb8 14 Be3 (14 a5 also does not help: 14...Rb3 15 Qa4 Nb4 16 Be2 Nd7! 17 Be3 Nc2+ 18 Kf1 Rxb2 19 Nd1 Bb3 20 Qc6 Nxa1 and Black is a piece up and in great shape) 14...Rb3 15 Rd1 Qa5 16 Qa1 Nxe4 (Partos-Stanciu, Bucharest 1975) 17 Rc1 Rfb8 18 Nd2 Rxb2 19 Ndx4 Ra2 and Black wins the queen and the game. Earlier on, 13 Qb6 Qc8 14 Bf4 is a much better try, although Black still has much compensation for the pawn. For example, 14...Nd7 15 Qc7 Qxc7 16 Bxc7 Nb4 17 0-0-0 Nxc5 and Black had a clear advantage, Mattsson-Carlberg, Sweden 1978, although castling queenside wasn't the brightest idea in the world.

Statistics

In the Hungarian Variation White has scored of 53% over 1006 games (36% wins, 34% draws and 30% losses). A very standard score, which underlines this variation as an absolute main line in the Grünfeld.

Theoretical?

This is a rather theoretical variation with 15-20 moves of theory in many cases. And Black is forced to remember his theory, as otherwise he can easily end up in trouble. If White plays slowly with 8 Be2, Black needs to know the temporary pawn sacrifice, while if White tries something with e5-e6 followed by h2-h4 or simply h2-h4-h5 on its own, Black will have to know what he is doing.

Then again, all lines in the Russian Variation are reasonably theoretical. White has a strong, broad centre, and if Black is unable to create counterplay quickly through his minimal lead in development, then he will be worse.

Game 29

□ Kasparov ■ Leko

Linares 2000.

1 d4 Nf6 2 Nf3 g6 3 c4 Bg7 4 Nc3 d5 5 Qb3 dxc4 6 Qxc4 0-0 7 e4 a6 8 Be2 b5 9 Qb3 (Diagram 4) 9...c5!

This move is enormously important. White is about to play e4-e5 any time, and Black must answer this with ...Nfd7. Therefore it is important to make ...Nxc5 an immediate possibility. White does win a pawn but only temporarily, as he is behind in development and needs to finish that before he can think about holding onto pawns.

Black has also tried to develop more statically, but the impression is not comforting. For example, 9...Bb7 10 e5 Nd5 (this the main idea – Black wants to exchange on c3; 10...Nfd7 11 e6! is different from the main game and clearly uncomfortable for Black) 11 0-0 and here Black has tried the following moves:

a) 11...c5 (the best try) 12 dxc5 Nd7! 13 Nxd5 Nxc5 14 Nxe7+ (this is not the only move, but it looks good enough to gain an advantage) 14...Qxe7 15 Qa3 Rac8 16 Bf4! Rfe8! 17 Rac1 Bxf3 18 Bxf3 Bxe5 19 Be3 Bd6 20 Rcd1! Qf6 21 Rd5! Nb7 22 Qb3! and Black was under pressure in Alterman-Pelletier, Bad Wiessee 1997.

b) Slower is 11...Nxc3 12 Qxc3 Nd7 13 Bf4 Bd5 14 Rfc1 c6, when Black has failed in the opening. White has some space and freedom, and Black is suffering from not obtaining any dynamic counterplay. After 15 Nd2 f6 16 Bg3 fxe5 17 dxe5 Qb6 18 Bf3 Rad8 19 Bxd5+ cxd5 20 Nf3 Rf5 21 Re1 White had a good game in Petrosian-Gulko, Vilnius 1978. He has the d4-square for his knight, a better pawn structure and control over the only open file on the board.

10 dxc5 Bb7 11 0-0!

White shouldn't push his luck this early on. After 11 e5 Nfd7 Black appears to have a good game, for example:

a) 12 e6?! is too optimistic and has not been played at the top level. Black can react violently with 12...Nxc5 13 exf7+ Rxf7 14 Qc2 Nc6 15 0-0 Rxf3!? (15...Nb4 is less risky and also favours Black) 16 Bxf3 Nd4 17 Qd1 Nxf3+ 18 gxf3 Qxd1 19 Rxd1 Bxf3 20 Rd2 Rc8 and Black has a fantastic game in return for the exchange. It is not easy to see how White can possibly free himself in this position.

b) It is important to protect the c-pawn with 12 Be3!. Now Black can continue with 12...e6, a move that has won popularity over time. The key idea is that Black has no use for a bishop on e5, but will be very happy to have a knight there. Therefore the e-pawn is fixed on e5 and will be captured later (after ...Nc6). Here White has tried two different moves:

b1) 13 a4 Qa5! 14 0-0 b4 15 Na2 Nc6 16 Rfd1 Ndxex5 with equality, Sokolov-Alterman, Leeuwarden 1994. Both players have problems: the a2-knight and the b2-pawn for White; the passed pawn on c5 and a possible intrusion on d7 for Black. The b4-pawn may also become a victim to a sudden attack. Still, Black should not fear this kind of position.

b2) 13 0-0 (the quietest and most reliable move) 13...Qc7 14 a4 Nxc5 15 Qb4 Nxa4 16 Nxa4 bxa4 17 Rfc1 Nc6 18 Qxa4 Rfc8 and the game is rather even, Farago-Ftacnik, Ljubljana 1998. Black has some play against e5 and White has some pressure on the queenside.

11...Nxe4

Black should, of course, take his pawn back.

12 Nxe4 Bxe4 13 Bg5

White has other options here, including 13 Bf4.

13...Nc6 14 Qe3 Qd5!?

Black does not want to diminish his presence in the centre. White is somewhat better after 14...Bf5 15 Bh6!, after which he is able either to exchange Black's best piece or win an exchange. Ftacnik gives the following line: 15...Bxb2!? 16 Rad1 Qa5 17 Bxf8 Rxf8 18 Bd3 and evaluates that White is a bit better. This is probably correct. Black has two pawns for the exchange after 18...Bxd3 19 Rxd3 Qxa2, but he also has some problems. There are some holes around the king and White has a strong passed pawn on c5.

15 Rad1 Qe6!?

This was a new move prepared for the occasion. Previously the equally tenable 15...Qf5 had been played. There is no special reason why one move should be better than the other, but for a top player it is important to be the first to deviate from theory, thus avoiding a possible unpleasant surprise from the opponent.

16 Bh6 Bf5

The real difference. Black is able to ease the pressure somewhat.

17 Bxg7

Leko gives the following explanation as to why White did not exchange queens himself: 17 Qxe6 Bxe6 18 Bxg7 Kxg7 19 a3 Bb3!, when Black will control the d-file to ensure a good position. Kasparov judges that it is more important to stay active than to keep an immaculate pawn structure.

17...Qxe3 18 fxe3 Kxg7 19 a3

19 Nd4 is easily met with 19...Be4!, when Black is no worse. Later, when he does take on d4, he will have d5 for his bishop.

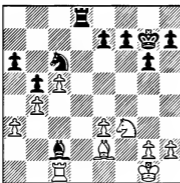
Another line is 19 Rd2 Rfc8! 20 Nd4 Be4 21 Rf4 Nxd4 22 exd4 Bd5 with equality. The passed pawn is well under control and Black has an obvious break in ...e5, ripping White's position apart.

19...Rfd8 20 b4

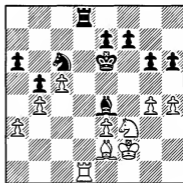
White has managed to protect his passed pawn and this static advantage is irritating for Black. Therefore it is important for him to create activity, something Leko does superbly in this game.

20...Bc2!

Fighting for the d-file. Again White is not allowed to linger.

21 Rxd8 Rxd8 22 Rc1 (Diagram 5)**Diagram 5**

Where does the bishop go?

**Diagram 6**

Time to simplify

22...Be4!

Here the bishop keeps an eye open for the most vital squares.

A fantastic line was 22...Bd3?! 23 Nd4! Rxd4? (winning two pieces for a rook, but White's pawns are deadly) 24 exd4 Bxe2 25 d5 Nd4 26 c6 Bg4 27 Re1! with the threat of 28 Re4, forking the bishop and knight. Here the only move is 27...Ne2+ but then White can win with the aesthetic 28 Rxe2! Bxe2 29 h3 Bd3 30 g4 and the pawn cannot be prevented from promoting. All of this analysis was, of course, given by Peter Leko.

**23 Kf2 Kf6**

The kings race to the centre.

NOTE: Kings can move around freely in the endgame without experiencing the same dangers as a centralised king in the middlegame.

24 g4

White tries to improve his position move by move. 24 Rd1 gives White no advantage after 24...Rxd1 25 Bxd1. Now the bishop no longer keeps an eye on b5, and Black is able to gain sufficient counterplay for a draw with 25...a5!

24...h6 25 h4 Ke6

In his notes Leko illustrates well how Black should avoid giving White any weaknesses to attack: 25...g5?! 26 hxg5+ hxg5 (here the pawn is simply exposed) 27 Nd4! Ke5 (27...Nxd4? 28 exd4 Rxd4 29 Ke3 Ke5 30 c6 Rd8 31 a4! would give White two passed pawns on the queenside) 28 Bf3 Bxf3 29 Nxf3+ and it is suddenly apparent that ...g5 is nothing but a weakening move, tying down Black's king when it would rather stay in the centre.

26 Rd1 (Diagram 6)

Believing he cannot improve his position any further, White decides to simplify. This is probably a correct decision.

26...Bxf3!

Black is now ready to go into a different endgame. White will not be able to penetrate effectively both in the pawn ending, as in the game, and a bishop versus knight endgame.

27 Rxd8

27 Kxf3 Rxd1 28 Bxd1 Ke5! also leads to a draw. White has no way to create weaknesses here, and if Black wishes to do so, he can transfer his knight to c7, where it completely controls all the important points.

27...Bxe2!

This is what Leko had decided in advance. White is now forced to go into a king and pawn endgame.

28 Rc8 Kd7 29 Rxc6 Kxc6 30 Kxe2

This pawn endgame is far from trivial, but Leko was sure how to draw.

30...f6

After the game Kasparov allegedly said, 'This endgame is drawn only by a miracle,' to which Leko answered, 'Of course it is a draw. Otherwise I would not have entered it.'

31 Kd3

Or 31 e4 e5 and White has no point of entry.

31...e6 32 Kd4 g5!

Black is ready to give White two passed pawns as long as he himself gets two of his own.

33 h5 Kd7 34 e4 Kc6 35 e5

Otherwise Black will close the position completely with ...e6-e5.

35...f5 36 gxf5 exf5 37 e6 f4!

Leko is accurate to the end. If he had pushed the other pawn, he would have lost: 37...g4 38 Ke5 g3 39 e7 Kd7 40 Kf6 g2 41 c6+ Kd6 42 e8Q g1Q 43 Qd7 mate. In this way pawn endings are so charmingly concrete.

38 Ke4

Now if White goes too far, he will be in trouble: 38 Ke5? f3 39 e7 Kd7 40 Kf6 f2. The difference is that Black will queen with check and therefore win easily after 41 c6+ Ke8.

38...Kc7 ½-½

Game 30

□ Topalov ■ Leko

Wijk aan Zee 2001

1 d4 Nf6 2 Nf3 g6 3 c4 Bg7 4 Nc3 d5 5 Qb3 dxc4 6 Qxc4 0-0 7 e4 a6 8 e5 b5 9 Qb3 Nfd7

9...Be6? is a well known mistake, although for some reason the computer cannot see the problem. White's strongest continuation is 10 exf6! Bxb3 11 fxg7 Kxg7 12 axb3 with three pieces for the queen and not, as the computer claims, a slight disadvantage but rather very good chances. 9...Ng4 is less popular but also possible.

10 h4

White did not play 8 e5 just in a vain hope that Black wouldn't notice his knight was threatened. White wants to attack Black's position where it is perceptibly the weakest, on the kingside. As we shall see, Black's best policy is to try to undermine White's centre as quickly as possible. By eliminating White's centre, Black can get his queen, knight and other pieces to the kingside, often with the help of a much-needed check.

Another important move here is 10 e6!? fxe6 and now:

a) 11 Qxe6+ Kh8 12 Ng5 looks like a strong assault, but actually White is digging his own grave. Black has had success here with quite a few moves (not including ...Qe8 to prevent Nf7). The move 12...Ne5!? was at one time the official antidote to this approach, but let us instead draw our attention to what happens if Black just gives up the exchange for the initiative: 12...Nf6!? 13 Nf7+ Rxf7 14 Qxf7 Nc6 and now:

a1) 15 Qb3? Nxd4 16 Qd1 Bb7 17 f3 (17 Be3 c5 gives Black an excellent game – White is unable to develop his pieces) 17...Nd5 18 Nxd5 Qxd5 19 Bd3 Rd8 20 0-0 (20 Be4 looks like what White was planning, but Black wins after 20...Qc4! and there is nothing White can do to

save himself, e.g. 21 Kf2 Bxe4 22 fxe4 Rf8+ 23 Ke1 Nc2+ 24 Kd2 Bh6 mate) 20...Nf5 21 g4 21 Bxf5 Qxd1 22 Rxd1 Rxd1+ 23 Kf2 gxf5 Nh4 0-1 Koziak-Karavaev, Voronezh 1999. What a horrible end for White! a2) 15 Be3 (this is better) 15...Nxd4 16 Bxd4 (16 0-0-0 might look clever, but Black regains the exchange and ends a pawn up after 16...Be6!) 16...Qxd4, when Black has a strong attack for the exchange. The main line is probably 17 Rd1 Qe5+ 18 Be2 Bb7 19 0-0 b4 20 Qb3 Bxg2 21 Kxg2 bxc3 22 Bf3 Qg5+ 23 Kh1 Rf8 24 bxc3 Qf4 with a better game for Black. All of this is computer analysis and is thus neither very original nor necessarily very reliable. But sometimes it is nice to just have a hint of what lies in the position, and that is what this book is all about.



NOTE: It is often easier to obtain compensation for an exchange when you have opposite-coloured bishops. The reason is that you may be able to dominate one colour with your minor pieces.

b) 11 Be3 is probably the main move these days. It is the strongest attempt at a ruthless refutation of the Hungarian Variation, but presently it seems that Black should be doing fine if he follows in the footsteps of a highly dynamic approach presented here in a recent game: 11...Nf6 12 a4 b4! (rather than to letting White open the a-file for his rook, Black sacrifices back a pawn to open the b-file for *his* rook and also to gain some time) 13 Qxb4 Nc6 14 Qc5 Qd6 15 Bc4 Rb8 16 0-0!? (White decides that his development has the top priority; this shows something about the respect grandmasters have for Black's activity here) 16...Rxb2 17 Rab1 Qxc5 18 dxc5 Rc2 19 Rfc1 Rxc1+ 20 Bxc1 Rd8 and Black has a good game, Gyimesi-Svidler, Germany 2002.

c) 11 h4!? has also been played here, but this is a whole new story. As this is not a book that in any way claims to be more than inspirational, I will let the ambitious reader know that the move exists, and let him find further knowledge elsewhere.

10...Nb6 11 h5 c5!

Black needs to be active, otherwise White's attack will be first.

12 hxg6 hxg6 13 dxc5 Be6 14 Qc2 Bf5 15 Qb3 Be6 16 Qa3



TIP: Repeating the position once when only you and not the opponent can deviate is often a useful psychological trick, as it emphasises who is in control of the events.

Still, you should not do this mindlessly. It may allow your opponent the opportunity to find an 'only move' on move 41 right after the time control, rather than at move 39. Only repeat the position for psychological effect if it has no negative effects.

16...Nc4 17 Bxc4 Bxc4 18 Bh6 Bxh6 19 Rd1 Qc7 20 Rxh6 Nc6 (Diagram 7)

The players already knew all of this. When they were sitting in the analysis room afterwards, they did not analyse for more than a few

minutes, asking each other a few questions. The draw that now follows is not forced, but seems to be a fair result.

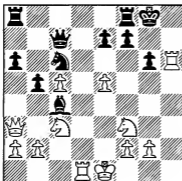


Diagram 7
Still theory

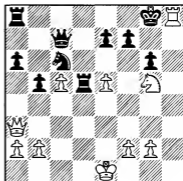


Diagram 8
A cute perpetual

21 Nd5 Bxd5 22 Rxd5 Rfd8

It might seem that White is simply a pawn up, but in reality his rook is out of play on h6 and he could easily lose at least a pawn before the rook is able to return to the centre. Therefore White decides to force a draw.

23 Ng5

In one game White tried for an advantage with 23 Qb3!?. Now Ftacnik, who was Black in the game, suggests that he should have played 23...Rxd5 24 Qxd5 Rd8. White's only way to try for an advantage is with 25 Rxg6+!? Kf8 26 Qxc6 Qa5+ 27 Kf1 fxe6 28 Qxe6, but after 28...Qxa2 there is no reason why Black should be any worse. He has a potential passed pawn on the queenside and White's king is in just as much trouble as Black's. That said, the objective evaluation is probably a draw.

23...Rxd5 24 Rh8+! (Diagram 8)

The only move. 24 Qh3? is, of course, not dangerous. Virtually anything works for Black here, but most obvious is probably 24...Qxe5+ 25 Kf1 Rd1 mate.

24...Kg7

Not 24...Kxh8?? 25 Qh3+ Kg7 26 Qh7+ Kf8 27 Qh8 mate.

25 Rh7+ Kg8 26 Rh8+ ½-½

The Prins Variation 7...Na6

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 Nf3 Bg7 5 Qb3 dxc4 6 Qxc4 0-0 7 e4 Na6 (Diagram 9)

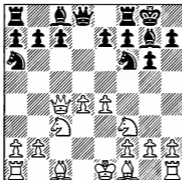


Diagram 9
The Prins Variation

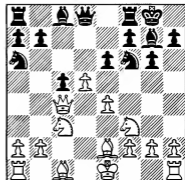


Diagram 10
A major choice

In the 1980s it was Kasparov who was the leading Grünfeld specialist, and he had (and still has) a love for 7...Na6 with the idea of 8...c5, allowing White to create a passed d-pawn. However, it is mainly the efforts of grandmaster Viktor Gavrikov that have ensured that this system has become what it is today. It was his idea of ...Qb6 with the basic threat of ...Qxb2 winning a pawn that restored credibility to the line after Kasparov got into trouble again and again against Karpov using his idea of ...Re8 and ...Ne4.

8 Be2

White has a long list of alternatives, but none of them has even been really popular. Here is a brief indication of what exists:

- 8 Bf4 c5 9 dxc5 Be6 10 Qb5 Bd7 11 Qxb7 Nxc5, as played in several games, is considered unclear. Black has good play for the pawn.
- 8 Qb3 c5 9 d5 e6 10 Bxa6 bxa6 11 0-0 exd5 12 exd5 Qb6 is considered equal, and there is no reason why Black should be worse. The pawn structure might be flawed, but the open b-file and the two bishops give Black activity. Of course White can close the b-file with Qxb6, but then Black has obtained the two bishops for nothing.
- 8 e5 Nd7 9 e6 Nb6 10 exf7+ Kh8 11 Qb5 c6 12 Qa5 Nc7 with very complex play. All in all, White's position does not ooze with confidence. He has won a pawn and created a slight weakness in Black's pawn structure, but the price, the unleashing of Black's dynamic potential, seems to be rather large.
- 8 b4 c6 9 Rb1 Nc7 10 Qb3 Bg4 is unclear. After the weaker 10 h3? Black can undermine White's defence of the e4-pawn with 10...Nb5!, claiming an advantage in Speelman-Short, 1st match game, London 1991.

8...c5 9 d5 e6 (Diagram 10)

Now White has a choice. 10 Bg5 is the subject of Game 31, while the main move, 10 0-0, is considered in Game 32.

Statistics

From the position after 7...Na6, White scores 51% over 1018 games, winning 34%, drawing 33% and losing 31%. If we take the main position after 10 0-0 in Game 32, then White scores 54% from 598 games (37% wins, 34% draws and 29% losses). These are probably the most realistic numbers to work with.

Theoretical?

In some respects the Grünfeld is always quite theoretical in that the variations are very direct and sharp, and prior knowledge will be an important tool for the practical player. However, if we compare the Prins Variation to the Hungarian Variation, we find that it's not such a life or death situation when it comes to theory. That said, more theory is required here than in the Nimzo-Indian or the Queen's Gambit Declined; the Grünfeld is simply a much more ambitious concept.

Game 31

□ Beliaevsky ■ Kasparov

Belfort 1988

In this game Beliaevsky tries to mow down Black's defences, but Kasparov is in top form and brilliantly repulses the attack, showing that it is White's king that is in real trouble.

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 Nf3 Bg7 5 Qb3 dxc4 6 Qxc4 0-0 7 e4 Na6 8 Be2 c5 9 d5 e6 10 Bg5 exd5 11 Nxd5

Capturing with the knight is the main point behind 10 Bg5.

11...Be6 12 0-0-0!?

White is very aggressive and takes chances. When this game was played, many spectators believed that the world champion was on his way into serious trouble.

12...Bxd5 13 Rxd5 Qb6 14 Bxf6

This is the real problem behind White's strategy. Now Black has a strong bishop aiming at White's king, which forces him into closing the long diagonal. At the moment White controls the flow of the river, but eventually it will build up and become a waterfall beyond his control.

White could consider the less aggressive 14 Rd2!?, but after something like 14...Qc6 Black has good play.

14...Qxf6 15 e5 Qf5!

White does not really want to put his bishop on d3, so Black tempts him.

16 Bd3

16 Rhd1? Bh6+! 17 Nd2 Nb4, with the evil threat of 18...b5!, is not something White can accept.

16...Qc8 (Diagram 11)

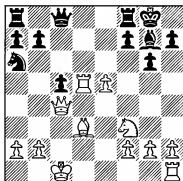


Diagram 11
What is Black's threat?

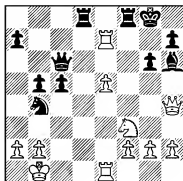


Diagram 12
A sucker punch

17 Rd1

White probably saw the threat but underestimated the resources Black has at his disposal. In a later game White tried to improve with 17 Rd6!?, but Black still has many good moves at his disposal.

17...b5!

Of course the pawn is immune due to ...Nc7.

18 Qh4 Nb4 19 Bxg6?

White is going all out in his attempt to prove his strategy. He has a better development and hopes with this piece sacrifice to be able to convert this into a dangerous attack. But the problem is that Black's king is too well guarded. The bishop on g7 is a mighty defender and there are no obvious weaknesses in the pawn structure.

It was later proven that White would have been much worse after 19 Rd6 c4 20 Be4 (20 Bb1? Nd3+!) 20...c3. However, the emergence of strong chess playing programs have changed this evaluation. After 21 R1d4! cxb2+ 22 Kxb2 Qc5 23 a3 Rac8 24 axb4 Qc1+ 25 Ka2 Rc3 26 Ra6 it appears that Black has no way to strengthen his attack, and must give perpetual check (26...Rc2+). The move 26...Rfc8 does not help, as White has 27 Rd8+ exchanging this extra attacker. Still, Black is not forced to go for this drawing line. After 19...Nxa2+ 20 Kb1 Nb4 Black's position still gives a good impression.

19...fxg6

The only recapture. After 19...hxg6? 20 Ng5 Re8 21 Rd7 Black will be mated.

20 Rd7 Qe8!

Protecting the e6-square so that White cannot swing his knight round.

21 Re7

After 21 a3 Nc6 22 e6 there is nothing left for White for many reasons. Among them is 22...Nd4, which simply excludes the d1-rook from the attack.

21...Bh6+

White's queen cannot be in two places at the same time, so Kasparov takes his chance to create a mating net around White's king.

22 Kb1 Rd8! 23 Rd6

After 23 Re1 Black wins with 23...Qc6!! (Diagram 12).

The fantastic point is that after 24 Qxh6 Black forces mate with 24...Rd1+!! 25 Rxd1 Qe4+ 26 Ka1 Nc2+ 27 Kb1 Na3+ 28 Ka1 Qb1+ 29 Rxb1 Nc2. This line was not in Kasparov's original notes to the game. It is obvious why even he thinks the computers have added a new dimension to chess.

23...Qc6!

Not quite as strong as against 23 Re1, but still a nice move.

24 a3

The only move. 24 Rxc6 Rd1 is an immediate mate, while 24 Qxh6 Qe4+ is not much slower.

24...Rxd6 25 exd6 Qxd6 26 axb4 cxb4 27 Qe4?!

27 Re1 was the last chance, but eventually White would have to yield. Black is no longer under attack and he is a pawn up.

27...b3 28 Nd4

Exchanging queens brings no relief. After 28 Qe6+ Qxe6 29 Rxe6 Rc8 30 Re1 Rc2 White loses the game on the second rank.

28...Rf4 29 Qa8+ Bf8 0-1

Game 32

□ Khalifman ■ Kasparov

Linares 2000

This is one of the most recent games played at the highest level in the Prins Variation.

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 Nf3 Bg7 5 Qb3 dxc4 6 Qxc4 0-0 7 e4 Na6 8 Be2 c5 9 d5 e6 10 0-0 exd5 11 exd5 Bf5 12 Be3 (Diagram 13)

This is the move that is considered the most dangerous these days. Earlier White played 12 Bf4 and Karpov and Kasparov had many battles with 12...Re8 intending ...Ne4. This is still considered acceptable, but probably stronger is Gavrikov's 12...Qb6!, which he and Popovic popularised at the end of the 1980s. The threat to the b-pawn is very real. For example, 13 d6? (the main move is 13 Be5) 13...Qxb2 14 Rab1 Bxb1 15 Rxb1 (Sasikiran-Aagaard, London 1998). Now if Black

were more alert than I was in the game, he would find 15...b5!! 16 Qd3 c4 and White has nothing to show for his exchange.

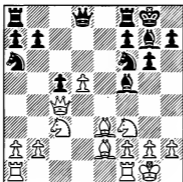


Diagram 13
The most dangerous

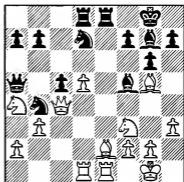


Diagram 14
Attacking the rook

12...Qb6 13 b3

The most recent game played in this variation continued 13 Qb5 Qxb5 14 Bxb5 Nc7 15 Bc4 b5 16 Nxb5 Nxb5 17 Bxb5 Nxd5 18 Bxc5 Bxb2 19 Rad1 Rfd8 20 Bc6 Nc3 ½-½ Shabalov-Ehlvest, Los Angeles 2003.

13...Rfe8 14 Rad1 Rad8!?

This natural move was actually a deviation from existing theory. Previously played had been 14...Ng4, which had never really worked out, and 14...Rxe3!? 15 fxe3 Ng4 16 Na4 Qd6 17 Qf4 Qxf4 18 exf4 Nb4 with compensation for the exchange. The latter line had proved sufficient to draw a couple of games, among them Korotylev-Baikov, Moscow 1999. Even so, it is rather demanding for Black to prove equality in this line. Even though the position might be objectively okay for Black, it is still a risky business.

15 h3 Qa5 16 Rfe1 Nd7 17 Na4 Nb4 18 Bg5 (Diagram 14)

White has to be careful or he could quickly be worse. After 18 Nxc5 Nxc5 19 Bxc5 he has not won a pawn. No, the line continues 19...Nc2 20 b4 Qa4 21 Rf1 b6 22 Bd4 Qxb4, when Black has regained his pawn, White's pawns are weak, and Black has a potential for creating a passed pawn on the queenside in the endgame.

18...Nc2 19 Bxd8 Qxd8 20 Rf1

If White returns the exchange with 20 Nxc5 Nxe1 21 Rxe1, then Black has good counterplay against the white d-pawn with 21...Nb6 22 Qb5 Re7! (a typical Kasparov move, after which only the queen is unprotected). Now White can play 23 Bd3 and equalise, but ends up in trouble after 23 Bc4? Rxe1+ 24 Nxe1 Bc3! 25 Nf3 (25 Ncd3 a6 26 Qc5 Nd7 27 Qd6 b5 and Black also wins) 25...a6! 26 Nxb7 axb5 27 Nxd8 bxc4 28 bxc4 Nxc4, when Black wins the endgame.

20...Nd4

The natural move. The dynamic potential in this position is illustrated by the following variation: 20...Na3!? 21 Qc1 Rxe2 22 Qxa3 Be4 and here White must deal with the threat of weakening his king's position:

a) 23 Nxc5?! is very dangerous because of 23...Bxf3 24 gxf3 Qg5+ 25 Kh1 Qf5 26 Nxd7 Qxh3+ 27 Kg1 Re5! 28 Qc1 (after 28 Nxe5 Bxe5 White will be mated) 28...Qxd7 29 Kg2 h6 and although White is an exchange up, his life is not easy. Black has at least enough compensation.

b) 23 Rfe1 Bxf3 24 gxf3 Rxe1+ 25 Rxe1 Qg5+ 26 Kf1 Qxd5 and Black is not worse.

21 Nxd4 Bxd4 22 Rxd4?!

Perhaps showing Kasparov too much respect. After 22 b4! White is probably better.

22...cxd4 23 Bg4

Not 23 Rd1? a6!, when Black wins a piece.

23...Bxg4 24 hxg4 Re4 25 f3

Now the game ends a draw.

25...Ne5 26 Qb4 Nd3 27 Qc4 Ne5 28 Qb4 Nd3 29 Qc4 ½-½

The Smyslov Variation 7...Bg4

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 Nf3 Bg7 5 Qb3 dxc4 6 Qxc4 0-0 7 e4 Bg4 (Diagram 15)

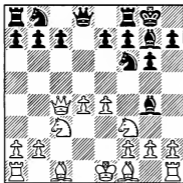


Diagram 15
The Smyslov Variation

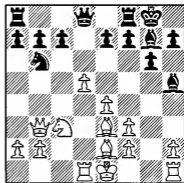


Diagram 16
A well known position

In the old days the main system was the Smyslov Variation. This is based on 7...Bg4 followed by 8...Nfd7, with the idea of kicking the white queen away with ...Nb6. This system is broad and complex

enough to justify a book of its own, but here it will have to do with just Game 33. This variation has produced many fantastic games, one of the most famous being Botvinnik-Fischer, Varna 1962, where, despite an extra pawn, Fischer was not able to win the rook endgame.

For many years was the development of the bishop to g4 and the manoeuvring of the knight to b6 was considered the best option for Black, and there are good reasons for this. The c8-bishop clearly needs to find a good square, White's weakest spot is the d4-pawn and the knight is only in the way on f6. These days more energetic variations have taken over as the main choices, but the Smyslov Variation remains a valid option for Black.

8 Be3 Nfd7!

This is the core move of the variation. The queen will be disturbed, d4 is put under pressure and Black finds a square for all his pieces.

9 Rd1

This is the main move, but naturally not the only one.

9...Nc6 10 Qb3

Over time it has been decided that the queen is best placed here, although it is not clear that this is actually the case. The old main line continued 10 Be2 Nb6 11 Qc5!? Qd6! 12 e5 (this was the move in the 1980s and it is still seen from time to time in tournament practice; weaker is 12 h3 Bxf3 13 gxf3 Rfd8 14 d5 Ne5 15 Nb5 Qf6 16 f4 Ned7 17 e5 Qxf4!, Botvinnik-Fischer, Varna 1962) 12...Qxc5 13 dxc5 Nc8 14 h3! (Karpov's improvement over his previous game with the white pieces in the same match with Kasparov) 14...Bxf3 15 Bxf3 Bxe5 16 Bxc6! bxc6 17 Bd4! (White is trying to increase his positional advantage by exchanging all of Black's well-placed pieces; only accurate play from Black holds the position) 17...Bf4! 18 0-0. Many games have been played from this position, but the first two are the defining ones:

- a) 18...a5? is overoptimistic and does little to solve Black's real problem, the misplaced knight on c8. White soon had a winning position after 19 Rfe1 a4 20 Re4 Bh6 21 Be5 a3 22 b3 Na7 23 Rd7, Karpov-Kasparov, 15th match game, Leningrad 1986.
- b) Necessary is 18...e5! 19 Be3 Bxe3 20 fxe3 Ne7 21 Rd7 Nf5 22 Rxc7 Rfc8 23 Rd7 Rd8 24 Rfd1 Rxd7 25 Rxd7 Nxe3 26 Rc7 Rb8! (removing the protection for White's knight and thereby helping the attack on White's king) 27 b3 Rd8 28 Ne4 Rd4 29 Nf6+ Kg7 30 Rxc6 Rd2 31 g4 Nc2 32 Kf1 Nd4 33 Ra6 Nf3 $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ Karpov-Timman, Tilburg 1986. This game was close to 100% home analysis and the conclusion stands to this day.

10...Nb6 11 d5 Ne5 12 Be2 Nxf3+ 13 gxf3 Bh5 (Diagram 16)

The bishop might look awkward out here, but it puts a constant pressure on f3. Also, White is not really able to castle, as a quick ...Qd7-h3 will be annoying. It can be argued that the knight on b6 is not really well placed here, but this problem is solved by a direct attack on the

d5-pawn with ...c7-c6, and thereby an opening of the c-file. In this way the rooks also get into play. See Game 33 for further details.

Statistics

After 8...Nfd7! White has an overall score of 57% over 717 games (winning 38%, drawing 38% and losing only 24%). If we consider only the 327 games played from 1990 to the present day, then White scores 58%, with 40% wins, 36% draws and 24% losses. All in all, Black is slightly under pressure statistically.

Theoretical?

Not so theoretical. The Smyslov Variation is not nearly as confrontational as the Hungarian and the Prins variation. Most of the developing moves are obvious and there are few reasonable alternatives.

Game 33

□ Mikhalevski ■ Dvoirys

Hoogeveen 2000

This game between two grandmasters illustrates the complexity, dangers and pitfalls of 7...Bg4.

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 Nf3 Bg7 5 Qb3 dxc4 6 Qxc4 0-0 7 e4 Bg4 8 Be3 Nfd7! 9 Rd1 Nc6 10 Qb3 Nb6 11 d5 Ne5 12 Be2 Nxf3+ 13 gxf3 Bh5

White now decides to put his rook on g3. Here it controls all access squares to the kingside and overprotects the pawn on f3.

14 Rg1 Qd7 15 Rg3 c6 16 a4 (Diagram 17)

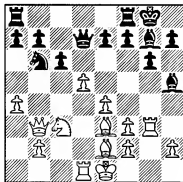


Diagram 17

White plans a4-a5

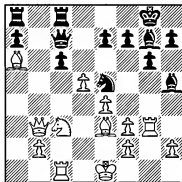


Diagram 18

Black begins to threaten

A very natural move. White is trying to dislodge the knight from b6. *ECO* considers the main line to be 16 dxc6 Qxc6 17 Nb5 Rfc8 18 Nxa7 Rxa7 19 Bxb6 Raa8 and gives an 'unclear' evaluation based on analy-

sis by Cebalo, which continues 20 Rg5 Qf6 21 Rc5 Qf4 22 Rxc8+ Rxc8 23 Be3 Qxh2 24 Qxb7 Qh1+ 25 Kd2 Qh3!. That this is not really forced and is really very unclear goes without saying. Many games have been played in this line, and the main conclusion is that White's 58% score in the statistics given earlier is a pretty accurate evaluation of the chances here.

16...Qc7 17 Rc1!?

This was the first new move of the game.

17...Rfc8!

Black wisely brings another piece into the game. He cannot stop White's attack on the queenside, but he can overprotect the c6-square in advance, as this is really his weakest spot.

18 a5

A dubious plan is 18 Nb5 Qb8! 19 dxc6 bxc6 20 Nxa7?! Qxa7 21 Bxb6 Qxa4 22 Qxa4 Rxa4, when Black has the better chances. Now that the position has opened on the queenside, White's rook on g3 is out of play.



NOTE: Opening the play on the queenside, where Black has a majority of heavy pieces, is an advantage for him in this line.

18...Nd7 19 a6

White is going for it with everything he's got, but the undermining of the light squares on the queenside is not so important as it is on the kingside. 19 dxc6!? bxc6 20 Qa3 was possibly stronger. White might be a tiny bit better, though it is not clear at all (20...e6! seems like a good response).

19...bxa6 20 Bxa6

Mikhalevski gives the following interesting line: 20 dxc6 Qxc6 21 Nd5 Qxc1+!? (21...Qd6 with equality is safer) 22 Bxc1 Rxc1+ 23 Kd2 Rb1 24 Nxe7+ Kf8 25 Qa3! Rxb2+ 26 Ke1 'with unclear play'. Actually, this looks rather risky for Black, but then again there is no reason why he should not have played 24...Kh8!.

20...Ne5! (Diagram 18)

This move is somehow attributed to Ivanchuk, but it is not really clear why. The main idea is again that the weakness of the light squares around the white king is more important than the weakness of light squares everywhere else on the board.

21 f4!?

Mikhalevski describes this as the 'only move', but it seems very dangerous. His analysis would not hold under close scrutiny. Alternatively:

a) 21 Bxc8?! Nd3+ 22 Ke2 Nxc1+ 23 Bxc1 Rxc8 is obviously not very good for White. The queenside is opened, the light-squared bishop is gone and White's king is very insecure.

b) It's worth to analysing 21 Be2!?. Now after 21...cxd5 22 Nxd5 Qa5+ Mikhalevski agrees with the first impression of my computer that Black is better. But is this really so easy to decide? White has a strong knight on d5 (it can go to f4, threatening h5) and his king is on its way into safety. The line 23 Kf1! Rxc1+ 24 Bxc1 e6 25 Nf4 Nd7 26 Be3 seems to favour White, if anybody. Probably Black's play can be improved, but it is not clear that it will give him an advantage as claimed by Mikhalevski. It seems that 21 Be2, giving White an acceptable game, was the natural path.

21...Nf3+ 22 Kf1?!

From his annotations, Mikhalevski makes it clear that he did not believe he was the one who needed to force a draw. Here he had one of many chances to do so with 22 Rxf3 Bxf3 23 Bxc8 Rxc8 24 dxc6 Bxc3+ 25 Qxc3 Bxe4 26 Qe5! Bxc6 27 Qxc7 Rxc7 28 Ra1! Rb7 29 Rxa7 Rxb2 30 Rxe7, when Black's advantage has been exchanged into nothing.

22...Rcb8 23 Qa4

Far from the only square, but definitely the most natural. From here White controls c6 and d4.

23...Rxb2!

23...Nxb2+ 24 Kg1! is not very good for Black; White is better after 24...Nf3+ 25 Kg2 Nh4+ 26 Kh3! Qd7+ 27 f5!. Black can invest some material and go for wild complications with 25...cxd5!. The position is clearly very complex and many different material imbalances are possible.

24 Be2?!

Mikhalevski rightly prefers 24 Qxc6!? Qd8 25 Kg2, but after 25...Nd4 26 Qa4 Rab8! Black still has a strong initiative.

24...Nd2+?!

A rather inventive sacrifice, but stronger was 24...Nxb2+! 25 Kg2 Bxe2 26 Nxe2 Rxe2 27 dxc6. According to Mikhalevski, this gives White compensation, but after 27...Rb2! 28 Kxh2 a5 Black seems to be simply a pawn up. White is forced into 29 Rc4 Rc8 30 e5 Rb4 31 Rxb4 axb4 32 Qxb4 e6. After ...Qxc6 Black will be a pawn up for nothing, and White's drawing chances are slim.

25 Bxd2

After 25 Kg2!? Bxe2 26 Nxe2 Nxe4 27 Qxe4 Rxe2 28 dxc6 e6! Black has a better endgame. True, the queen is not the best blockader, but Black is a pawn up and the a-pawn will be a strong player too.

25...Rxd2 26 Bxh5 (Diagram 19)

26 Qxc6!? Bxe2+ 27 Nxe2 Qd8 would give Black good chances too.

26...Qxf4!

This was, of course, the idea behind Black's play. After 26...gxh5? 27 Qxc6 he would have been close to losing.

27 Bf3?!

Mikhalevski blames this inaccuracy on time trouble (it is interesting that after 17 moves of theory, White has already used up virtually all his time at move 27). He gives the following splendid analysis, upon which I've slightly elaborated: 27 Be2! Bd4 28 Rg2 (28 Rf3 Qxh2 29 Ke1! Rb2 30 Qxd4 Qh1+ 31 Bf1 Qxf3 32 Nd1 Rb6 gives Black good chances, though nothing is clear) 28...Rb2! 29 Rd1! (29 Qd1?! Rab8! with the threat ...Bxc3 and ...Rb1 gives Black a strong initiative) 29...Bxc3! 30 Qxc6 Rxe2!! 31 Qxa8+ Kg7. It now looks as if White is forced into 32 Kxe2 Qxe4+ 33 Kf1 Qc2! 34 Re1 Qd3+ 35 Kg1 Bxe1 36 Rg3 Qd4 37 Re3 Bb4, when his chances of survival are very slim, but Mikhalevski found the nice 32 d6!! and now:

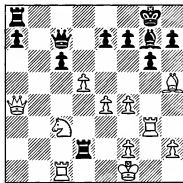


Diagram 19

Ignoring the obvious capture

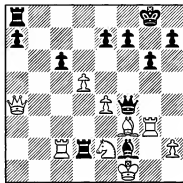


Diagram 20

White misses the last chance

- a) 32...Qf3 leads to a draw with 33 dxe7! Rxf2+ 34 Rxf2 Qxd1+ 35 Kg2 Qg4+.
- b) 32...Rd2 33 Rxd2 Qxd2 34 Rg3 exd6 35 Qd5 should also be a draw.
- c) 32...Rxe4? 33 Rg3 Rd4 (33...Bd4 34 Rxd4! Rxd4 35 dxe7 and White wins) 34 dxe7!! (for some reason Mikhalevski overlooks this move and only gives 34 Rdd3? Rxd3 35 Rxd3 Bd4 36 Rxd4! Qxd4 37 dxe7 Qd1+ 38 Kg2 Qg4+ with a draw; now White wins) 34...Rxd1+ 35 Kg2 Qc4 36 Rxc3! Qf1+ 37 Kg3 Qg1+ 38 Qg2 and the pawn will eventually queen. So the conclusion is that White should have been able to draw with 27 Be2.

27...Bd4!

The bishop is introduced into the attack.

28 Rc2?

White cracks under the pressure from Black's well-placed pieces and the ticking of the clock. There were better options:

- a) 28 Nd1!? cxd5! 29 exd5 Rxf2+ 30 Nxf2 Qxc1+ 31 Nd1 Qf4 and although Black is attacking and White defending, it is not clear that Black is better.



TIP: Like exchange sacrifices, piece sacrifices often work well in positions with opposite-coloured bishops. For one thing, exchanges are limited.

b) 28 Ne2 was also better than the text move. After 28...Rxe2 29 Kxe2 Qxc1 30 Qxd4 Rb8 31 Bg2 Rb2+ 32 Kf3 cxd5 33 Kg4! dxe4 34 Bxe4 it is not obvious that Black will be able to finish White off. After 34...f5+? 35 Bxf5 gxf5+? Black is mated with 36 Kxf5+ Kf7 37 Qd5+ e6+ 38 Qxe6+ Kf8 39 Rg8.

28...Bxf2 29 Ne2?! (Diagram 20)

29 Rxd2 was last fighting chance. After 29...Qxd2 30 Qxc6 Rb8 31 Ne2 Bxg3 32 hxg3 Qe3 33 Kg2 a5 Black has excellent chances, but nothing has yet been decided.

29...Rxe2!

Now White collapses.

30 Rxe2 Bxg3 31 hxg3 Qxf3+ 32 Rf2 Qh1+ 33 Ke2 cxd5 0-1

Black Plays 7...Nc6

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 Nf3 Bg7 5 Qb3 dxc4 6 Qxc4 0-0 7 e4 Nc6!? (Diagram 21)

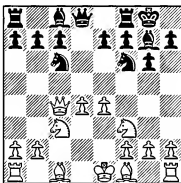


Diagram 21

The provocative 7...Nc6

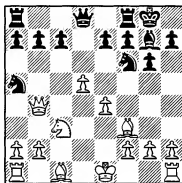


Diagram 22

The main line for 7...Nc6

This provocative move is played in the spirit of the Grünfeld, but there have been too few practical tests so far to make conclusions on its soundness. It's an interesting sideline, and the support of Sutovsky, Svidler and Rowson is not something that can be easily ignored, even if the recommendations in Rowson's book have been left behind by time.

7...c6 is rare and also somewhat dubious. The problem for Black is that his counterplay is too reliant on pawns. The knight on b8 has lost the natural means of development: the move ...Nc6 is no longer possi-

ble, and after ...Na6, it makes little sense to play ...c6-c5. Also, the light-squared bishop is more or less forced to trade itself on f3, while f6-knight is somewhat in the way. Worst of all, there is no counter-play against the d4-pawn, so White has no real problems keeping his centre together. Still, Black does have play on the queenside, which is not so easy to prevent. In the game Berdichesky-Kunzmann, Argentina 1999, White employed what is probably the best strategy – he simply ignored it: 8 Qb3 a5 9 Be2 a4 10 Qc2 a3 11 b4 Bg4 12 Be3 Ne8 13 0-0 Nd6 14 Rab1 Bxf3 15 Bxf3. Here White is better developed, has the two bishops and no real problems with his centre.

8 Be2 Bg4 9 d5 Na5!

Causing White to misplace his queen somewhat; this move has always been considered best. The latest try at the top level to revive 9...Bxf3 10 gxf3 Na5 did not go so well. After 11 Qd3 Ne8 12 f4 e6 13 e5! exd5 14 Nxd5 c6 15 Nc3 c5 16 Be3 b6 17 0-0-0 Qxd3 18 Rxd3 Nc7 19 Rd7 White had a large advantage, Anand-Leko, Monaco (rapid) 2001.

10 Qb4 Bxf3 11 Bxf3 (Diagram 22)

Now there is no sense in recapturing with the pawn, as there is no ...Ne5 to worry about. This position is discussed in Game 34.

Statistics

In 400 games after 7...Nc6 White has a score of 54% overall, winning 36%, losing 29 and drawing 35% of the games.

Theoretical?

Not really. The long, deep lines apparently do not work for Black. It is in the fresh territory presented in Game 34 that Black finds his future.

Game 34

□ Kaspi ■ Sutovsky

Ramat 2000

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 Nf3 Bg7 5 Qb3 dxc4 6 Qxc4 0-0 7 e4 Nc6!? 8 Be2 Bg4 9 d5 Na5! 10 Qb4 Bxf3 11 Bxf3 c6 12 0-0 Qb6!

This is the move that is currently making the variation work. Previously it was thought that Black was okay after 12...cxd5 13 exd5 Rc8 14 Re1 Re8 15 Be3 Nc4 16 Bxa7 b6 17 Rac1 Bh6 18 Rc2 Nd2 (Diagram 23). All this was played in Bareev-Ivanchuk, Elista 1998 and recommended in Rowson's book on the Grünfeld as good enough for equality. Unfortunately, White is completely winning after 19 Bd1!. Bareev mentioned nothing about this move in his annotations to the game. And why should he? He makes his living from winning games, and not from giving away improvements on his opening play. In the later game Yakovich-Barkhagen, Neum 2000, White won after 19...Nxd5 20 Qh4 Kg7 21 Qd4+ Nf6 22 Bxb6 Qd7 23 Na4 e5 24 Qxd7

Nxd7 25 Ba5 Nc4 26 Bc3 f6 27 Bg4 f5 28 Be2 Nf6 29 Bb4 Nd5 30 Be5
Nd6 31 Rd1 Nb4 32 Rc3 Nxa2 33 Bxd6 Nxc3 34 bxc3 Kf6 35 Nb6 Rcd8
36 Nd5+ Kg7 37 Ne7 Rxe7.

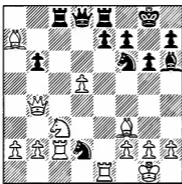


Diagram 23

Not to be recommended!

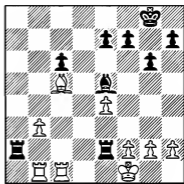


Diagram 24

White misses a draw



WARNING: Do not trust all that you read in opening books. Many writers quote incorrect analysis or give sloppy analysis themselves.

13 Qxb6

It is too early to say what White is to do against this new plan. 13 Qa4 Nd7 14 Rd1 Nc5 15 Qc2 Nc4 16 Be2 Qb4 17 a3 Qb3 18 Qxb3 Nxb3 19 Rb1 Nb6 gave Black sufficient counterplay in Kasimdzhanov-Sutovsky, Batumi 2001.

13...axb6 14 dxc6 bxc6 15 Rb1 Rfd8 16 Be2 Nd7

It is hard to imagine that White is better here. He has the two bishops, but they do not really have any scope, and Black's pieces are generally better placed.

17 Be3 b5 18 Rfc1 Nc4 19 Bxc4 bxc4 20 b3

White is trying to solve the problem of the b2 weakness. However, 20 Rd1, with even chances, should have been played.

20...Ra3!?

Black immediately puts White under pressure, although 20...Ne5 was maybe even stronger.

21 Kf1 Ne5 22 Bc5 Raa8 23 Na4?

The start of a completely misjudged plan. 23 Bxe7 Re8 24 Bd6 Nd3 25 Rc2 gives a complex position where Black can hold his own, but no more.

23...Rd2 24 Nb6 Rxa2 25 Nxc4 Re2 26 Nxe5 Bxe5 (Diagram 24) 27 g3?

White was still able to draw after 27 Be3 Bf4 28 Ra1! (probably the move that Kaspi overlooked) 28...Bxe3 (28...Rab2?? 29 Ra8+ Kg7 30 Bd4+ and White wins) 29 Rxa2 Rxa2 30 fxe3 Rb2 31 Rxc6 Rxb3 32 Kf2 and, although Black is better, it is not enough to matter.

27...Rxe4 28 Re1 Rxe1+ 29 Rxe1 Bd6 30 Bxd6?

This gives Black a passed pawn for no reason. Stronger was 30 Rc1! with the intention of exchanging the b- and c-pawns, thus making it into a drawn endgame. Now the rook endgame holds no real saving chances.

30...exd6 31 Re8+ Kg7 32 Rd8 Rd2 33 Ke1 Rd4 34 Ke2 Kf6 35 Ke3 Rd1 36 b4 Ke6

Black's plan is clear. He wants to win the b-pawn and try to promote his central pawns before White can act on the kingside.

TIP: Do not hurry!



When you have an endgame advantage where your opponent has no counterplay, you should not rush to prove your advantage: there is no prize for winning quickly. Try to obtain the best version of a future position by moving the pieces around. Often this strategy also makes the opponent lose his nerve and try to create counterplay where it is not justified. This has led to many a victory through time.

37 Rc8 Kd7 38 Rf8 Ke6 39 Rc8 Rc1 40 Rc7 Rc4 41 Kd3 d5 42 h4 h5 43 Rb7 Rc1 44 Rc7 Rc4 45 Rb7 Rc1 46 Rc7 f6 47 b5?

White is assisting Black in his plan – a standard effect of the 'Do not hurry' principle. The threat of ...g5, creating further weaknesses or a passed pawn, was apparently more than White could take.

47...c5 48 Kd2 Rc4 49 b6

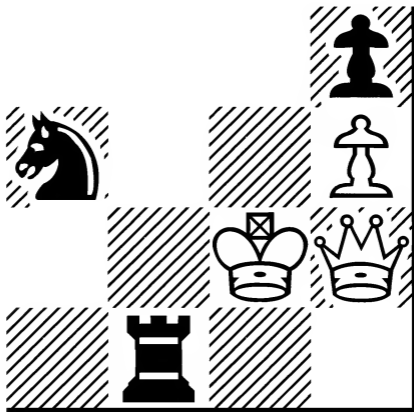
White cannot save the game. One possible end is 49 Rc6+ Ke5 50 b6 g5 51 hxg5 fxg5 52 Rg6 Rb4 53 Rxg5+ Kd4 54 Rxh5 Rb2+ 55 Kd1 c4 56 g4 Rxb6 57 g5 c3 58 Kc1 Ra6 59 Rh4+ Kd3 60 Rh3+ Kc4 61 Kb1 Kb3 and White has no defence at all. As predicted, his pawns got going way too late. The game has some similarities to this.

49...Kd6 50 Rg7 Rb4 51 Rxg6 Ke5 52 Rh6 c4 53 Rxh5+ Kd4 54 Rf5 c3+ 55 Kc1 Rxb6 56 h5 Kc4 57 h6 Rb7 58 Rxf6 d4 59 g4 Ra7 60 Rc6+ Kd3 61 Kb1 Rb7+ 62 Kc1 Re7 63 Kb1 Re1+ 64 Ka2 Kc2 65 g5 d3 66 h7 Re8 0-1

Chapter Six

Bf4 and Bg5 Systems

- White Plays 4 Bf4 Bg7 5 e3
- White Plays 4 Nf3 Bg7 5 Bf4
- White Plays Bg5



White Plays 4 Bf4 Bg7 5 e3

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 Bf4 Bg7 5 e3 (Diagram 1)

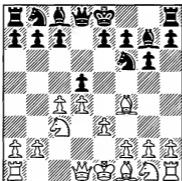


Diagram 1
A quiet start

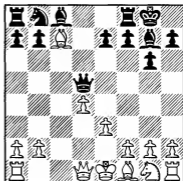


Diagram 2
White snatches a pawn

In this chapter we shall look at two different systems which, however, are similar in many ways. The first of these is 4 Bf4 followed by 5 e3. White's idea is to attack the c7-pawn, threatening to play 6 cxd5 and using the fact that Black's queen is overloaded.

5...0-0!

This well-known gambit allows White to carry out the threat, but this sacrifice seems questionable. Theoretically it is good enough for equality, but in practice it is uncomfortable for Black to defend the resulting endgame.

A more reliable option is to work out the details in the complex line 5...c5. In reality this system is not really dangerous for Black, but it is necessary to know what you are doing, or you can quickly end up in a bad situation. The main line is 5...c5 6 dxc5 Qa5 7 Rc1 Ne4 8 cxd5 Nxc3 9 Qd2 Qxa2 10 bxc3 Qa5 11 Bc4 Nd7, which is known to give Black sufficient counterchances.

6 cxd5 Nxd5 7 Nxd5

7 Bg3? does not make any sense, but was actually played in Kliewe-Schmidt, correspondence 1987. After 7...c5 Black quickly was better.

7...Qxd5 8 Bxc7 (Diagram 2)

Now see Game 35 for a continuation from this position.

Statistics

4 Bf4 Bg7 5 e3 0-0: Actually, White does not have as great a record as one would expect. White scores 55% from 1185 games, winning

36% of the games, drawing 37% and losing 27%. If he accepts the pawn sacrifice, his overall score goes up to 57%, but no more. So statistically this system is not too bad for Black. Yet the positions arising seem dreadful!

4 Bf4 Bg7 5 e3 c5: White has a minimal advantage of 52% over 980 games, winning 31%, drawing 41% and losing 28%.

Theoretical?

4 Bf4 Bg7 5 e3 0-0: Well, if you really want to give this pawn away, you need to know how to create counterplay in advance. It will be difficult to find something concrete at the board without preparation.

4 Bf4 Bg7 5 e3 c5: Yes, it's theoretical. I haven't covered the lines extensively, but they are not simple and take some work to get into. Therefore if you have a playing level of 2000 or above, I advise you to look at a serious opening manual. If not, you should be able to bluff your way through this minor sideline.

Game 35

□ Lputian ■ Obodchuk

Togliatti 2003

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 Bf4 Bg7 5 e3 0-0?! 6 cxd5 Nxd5 7 Nxd5 Qxd5 8 Bxc7 Na6

Practice has shown that this is the best move, but it is still not completely satisfactory for Black. Alternatively, 8...Nc6 9 Ne2 e5 10 dxe5 Qb5 11 Qb3 Qxb3 12 axb3 Nxe5 13 Nd4 has been played a few times and is better for White (*ECO*). Meanwhile, even worse for Black is 8...Bf5 9 Ne2! Na6 10 Nc3 Qc6 11 Ba5 e5 12 d5 (again *ECO*).

9 Bxa6!

White's problem is with his development, so a free development move like this should be accepted gracefully. Now Black needs to regain his pawn immediately.

9...Qxg2

The main move, after which Black is forced to go into this questionable endgame. However, the alternatives are truly horrible:

a) 9...Qc6?! 10 Bd3 Qxc7 11 f4! (preventing ...e5 and thus burying the g7-bishop). 11...f6 12 h4 e5 13 Qb3+ Kh8 14 h5 looked very bad for Black in Dreev-Yandemirov, Togliatti 2003.

b) 9...bxa6 10 Nf3 Bf5 11 Qb3 Qxb3 12 axb3 Rfc8 13 Ba5 Rab8 14 Nd2 e5 15 e4 Bd7 16 d5 Bb5 17 Bc3 f5 18 f3 with simply an extra pawn for White, Lputian-Yermolinsky, Novosibirsk 1986.

10 Qf3 Qxf3 11 Nxf3 bxa6 (Diagram 3)

Objectively Black should probably be able to draw this ending, but the important point for the practical player is that it's virtually impossible to win as Black, but quite easy to lose. *ECO* claims equality here, but there is an important thing you should know. An evaluation in

ECO can easily be based on a loose suggestion by an untitled player in a position where a top GM chose another path. Of course, the untitled player may be right, but this is not very likely, and this is not something you want to take chances with.

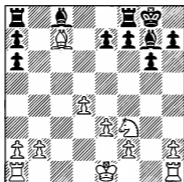


Diagram 3
A grim endgame

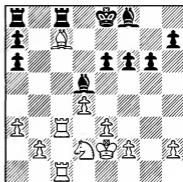


Diagram 4
White has complete control

Here the correct evaluation of the position is probably that White has a slight and enduring structural advantage. The d-pawn is better than the g-pawn.

12 Rg1

Another example is 12 Rc1 Bb7 13 Ke2 f6 14 Rc5 e6 15 Rhc1 Rf7 16 Bg3 (Gonda-Navara, Balatonlelle 2003). If White had now transferred his knight to d3, then maybe he would have been able to make more of the position than he did.

12...Bb7

Another example of how dreadful this endgame can be for Black is the following: 12...f6 13 Ke2 Bb7 14 Rgd1 e6 15 Rac1 Rf7 16 Rc3 Bf8 17 a3 Rd7 18 Rdc1 Rc8 19 Ne1 g5 20 Nd3 g4 21 Bg3 Bf3+ 22 Kd2 Rcd8 23 Rc8 e5 24 Rxd8 Rxd8 25 Rc4 exd4 26 exd4 h5 27 Kc3 Bd6 28 Bxd6 Rxd6 29 Rc7 Rc6+ 30 Rxc6 Bxc6 31 Nf4 Kg7 32 d5 Bd7 33 Kd4 Kh6 34 Ne6 h4 35 Ke4 1-0 Leitao-Atalik, Groningen 1996.

13 Ke2 Rfc8 14 Rac1 f6 15 Rgd1 Bd5 16 a3 Kf7 17 Nd2 Ke8 18 Rc5 e6 19 Rdc1 Bf8 20 R5c3 (Diagram 4)

Now White has complete control over the c-file and Black has no possibility of creating counterplay.

20...Kd7 21 Kd3 Bh6 22 R1c2 f5 23 f3 Bg5 24 Rc1 Bh6 25 h3 Bg5 26 R1c2 Bh6 27 Be5 Bc6 28 Ke2 Bb5+ 29 Kf2 Rxc3 30 bxc3!

Creating a passed pawn. The a-pawn will not fall.

30...Bf8 31 c4 Bc6 32 c5 Be7 33 Nc4 g5 34 Rb2 g4!?

Black tries to create some counterplay.

35 fxg4 fxg4 36 hxg4 Bh4+ 37 Ke2 Rg8 38 Bf4!

Threatening Ne5+.

38...Bb5 39 Kd3 e5

Or 39...Rxc4? 40 Rxb5 Rxf4 41 Rb7+ and White ends a rook up.

40 Bxe5 Rxc4 41 a4! Bc6

After 41...Bxa4 42 Rb7+ White, with his three passed pawns and well placed pieces, will win easily.

42 Bf4 Bf6 43 Rh2 Bxa4 44 Rxc7+ Ke6 45 Rh6 1-0

White Plays 4 Nf3 Bg7 5 Bf4

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 Nf3 Bg7 5 Bf4 (Diagram 5)

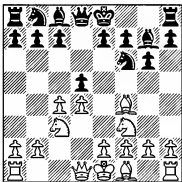


Diagram 5
Another Bf4 system

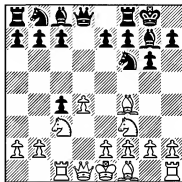


Diagram 6
e3 or e4?

This is the other system involving an early Bf4. The variation with 4 Nf3, 5 Bf4 and 6 Rc1 is more popular amongst the top players. Kramnik, Portisch, Van Wely and other strong players have employed this line with varying success.

5...0-0

Black also has a gambit starting with 5...c5!?, which seems unnecessarily risky and cannot be recommended. The exact reasons can be found in Game 36.

6 Rc1

The main move, giving an interesting game. Still, it seems that Black should not be worse if he has some idea of what he is doing. Alternatively:

a) 6 cxd5?! Nxd5 7 Nxd5 Qxd5 8 Bxc7 is not the same as in the previous section. Now the manoeuvre Ne2-c3, guarding the queenside with tempo, is no longer available, and after 8...Nc6 9 e3 Bf5 10 Be2 Rac8 Black has a strong initiative.

b) 6 e3 c5 7 dxc5 Qa5 8 Rc1 dxc4 9 Bxc4 Qxc5 is known not to be dangerous for Black, even though it has been played a few times at the highest level.

6...dxc4 (Diagram 6)

This is clearly the main move here, although both moves with the c-pawn have been tried. Now 7 e4 is considered in Game 37, while 7 e3 is the subject of Game 38.

Statistics

The statistics support the view that this one of White's strongest systems. After 6 Rc1 White scores 57% over 778 games. More interesting are the statistics after Black's best option, 6...dxc4, where White scores 55% over 377 games, winning 31%, drawing 48% and losing only 21%. Even though this is acceptable for Black, it is only just.

Theoretical?

Actually this line is not too bad. Stay away from 5...c5, which is completely reckless, and play 6...dxc4. Then you do not need to know too much.

Game 36

□ Riazantsev ■ Macieja

Moscow 2002

This game is quite theoretical and the variations are concrete, as this is a very forcing line.

1 d4 Nf6 2 e4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 Nf3 Bg7 5 Bf4 c5!? 6 dxc5 Qa5 7 cxd5 Nxd5 8 Qxd5 Bxc3+ 9 Bd2!

The difference from the 5 e3 line – the bishop can move back to d2.

9...Be6

Black's position is not entirely satisfactory after 9...Bxd2+ 10 Qxd2 Qxc5 (10...Qxd2+ 11 Nxd2 Na6 12 Rc1 Be6 13 a3 Rc8 14 b4 was simply an extra pawn for White, Grigore-Pasarelu, Eforie Nord 2002) 11 Rc1 Qf5 12 Nd4 Qd7 13 Qh6!. Now Black's choice is limited:

- a) 13...Qxd4 14 Rxc8+ Kd7 15 Rc3! looks quite dangerous. Besides, White has a slight long-term advantage of bishop versus knight.
- b) 13...Nc6 14 Nxc6 bxc6 15 Qg7 Rf8 16 e3 Qd5 17 Qc3 and White went on to exploit his positional advantage in Marin-Pasarelu, Eforie Nord 2002.

10 Qxb7! (Diagram 7)

The only test. After 10 Bxc3 Qxc3+ 11 Qd2 Qxd2+ 12 Kxd2 Na6! Black has sufficient counterplay. Actually, White needs to fight for equality. One game continued 13 c6?! Rd8+ 14 Kc3 (14 Ke1 Nb4! and Black is more than okay) 14...Rc8 15 Nd4 Bd5 16 Kd2 Bxc6 17 Rc1 Rd8 18 Kc3 Nb4! 19 Nxc6 Nxa2+ 20 Kc2 Rc8 21 Ra1 Nb4+ 22 Kb3 Nxc6 and White had to play really well in order draw in Dreev-

Shipov, Internet 2001. But of course one should not take an Internet game too seriously.

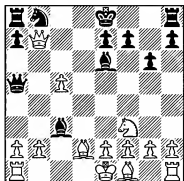


Diagram 7
The critical test

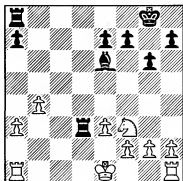


Diagram 8
White has an extra pawn

10...Bxd2+ 11 Nxd2 0-0 12 b4

12 Qxa8 is very, very dangerous. After 12...Rd8 13 0-0-0 (13 Rd1 Bd5 and the queen is trapped) 13...Qxa2 (13...Bd5? 14 Nb3! no longer works) 14 Qf3 (White loses quickly after 14 Qb7? Nc6!! 15 Qxc6 Rb8 16 b3 Bxb3) 14...Qa1+ 15 Kc2 Qa4+ 16 Nb3 Rxd1 17 Kxd1 Bxb3+ 18 Kd2 Qd4+ 19 Qd3 Qxb2+ 20 Ke3 Qe5+ 21 Qe4 Qxc5+ 22 Qd4 Qc7 Black has a very strong position. White's king is weak and the a-pawn is strong. Still, this line shouldn't be entirely dismissed for White. If he manages to get out with 23 f3, 24 Kf2 and 25 e4, he might still have chances.

12...Qa4 13 e3

Again it is very dangerous to take the rook. After 13 Qxa8 Nc6 14 Qb7 Nd4 15 Rc1 Nc2+ 16 Rxc2 Qxc2 17 f3 Qc1+ 18 Kf2 Qxd2 Black has at least equal chances. The investment of two pawns is not too much for this position.

13...Nd7 14 a3 Rfd8!

This is better than 14...Rad8, as Black needs the rook on a8 to play ...a5 on move 20.

The line 14...a5?! 15 Bb5 Qc2 16 Bxd7 Bxd7 17 0-0 Qxd2 18 Rad1! (the right rook; after 18 Rfd1 Qc3 19 Qxd7 axb4 White has won nothing) 18...Qc3 19 Rxd7 also does not really work out for Black.

15 Qa6

This is not the only possibility, although Black should be okay after 15 Bb5 Qc2 16 Bxd7 (16 Qe4 Qxd2+! and Black is fine) 16...Bxd7 17 Qe4 Qa4, when White has still not managed to completely untangle.

15...Qc2 16 Qd3 Qxd3?!

16...Qa4! is known to be better. Even so, Black still needs to prove his compensation.

17 Bxd3 Nxc5 18 Bc2

18 Bxg6 hxg6 19 bxc5 Rac8 is fine for Black. His activity will help him achieve a draw.

18...Nd3+ 19 Bxd3 Rxd3 20 Nf3 (Diagram 8)

Macieja recommended 20 Ne4! a5 21 Nc5 Rc3 22 Kd2 Rc4 23 Nxe6 fxe6 24 Rhc1 Rh4 25 b5 with advantage. If there are no improvements earlier, this might be correct. Here White keeps his extra pawn solely on the strength of the b-pawn. After 25...Rxb2 26 b6 Rb8 27 Rab1 Rxb2 White wins with 28 Ke2 Rg5 29 e4!, when Black's rook cannot get back in time.

20...a5 21 b5

21 Ke2 Rb3 22 Nd2 Rb2 23 Rhb1 is very strong for White.

21...a4!

Now Black has counterplay against White's b-pawn.

22 0-0 Bb3?!

The bishop should be here, but this is the wrong move order. Black could have drawn with 22...Rb8! 23 Nd4 Bb3 24 Rfb1 e5 25 Nxb3 Rxb5!.

23 Rfc1 Rb8 24 Rc5 f6?

Black could still hold with 24...Rd5!.

25 Nd4 e5 26 Nc6 Rb6 27 h4

Now White is a pawn up for nothing, and the ending is won with few problems.

27...Be6 28 Nb4 Rd7

28...Rb3 29 Rc6 is also sufficient for White.

29 Rc6 Rdb7 30 Rd1 Bf7 31 Rdd6 Rxb5 32 Rxf6 Rd7

White also wins easily after 32...Rxb4 33 axb4 a3 34 Ra6 a2 35 Rxf7 Kxf7 36 Rxa2 Rxb4 37 Ra7+ Kg8 38 g3 (Macieja).

33 Ra6 Bb3 34 Rfc6 Rd1+ 35 Kh2 Rb7 36 Rc5 e4 37 h5! gxh5 38 Rg5+ Kf7 39 Rxh5 Kg7 40 Rh4 Ra1 41 Rg4+ Kf7 42 Nc6 Rb5 43 Ra7+ Kf6 44 Rxh7 Be6 45 Rh6+ Kf5 46 Rf4+ Kg5 47 Rxe6 1-0

Game 37

□ Lputian ■ Ivanchuk

Elista 1998

1 d4 Nf6 2 e4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 Nf3 Bg7 5 Bf4 0-0 6 Rc1 dxc4 7 e4

White takes the chance to expand in the centre, but this move also weakens his control over d4.

7...Bg4!

Black fights for control of the dark squares in the centre in the most obvious way. By exchanging this bishop for the knight, he rids himself

of the one minor piece that cannot control dark squares. White's bishop on f1, on the other hand, plays no part in the battle.

7...b5?! was invented by Adorjan. The key idea is to destroy White's centre, but it does not seem to work: 8 Nxb5 (8 e5? Nd5 and Black is a pawn up) 8...Nxe4 and now:

- a) 9 Nxc7? e5 10 Nxa8 exf4 11 Bxc4 Bb7 clearly favours Black.
 b) 9 Bxc4 e6 10 Nc3 Nd6 (10...Nxc3!? 11 bxc3 Nd7 12 0-0 Nb6 is also fine for Black – Leko) 11 Be2 Nf5 12 Be5 Bh6! 13 Rc2 Nd7 14 0-0 Qa5 with good counterplay for Black in Van Wely-Leko, Groningen 1995.
 c) 9 Bxc7! Qd7 10 Bxc4 with a further split:
 c1) 10...Nc6 11 d5 was played in Kramnik-Kasparov, Frankfurt (rapid) 1998. But stronger is 11 Ne5! Nxe5 12 dxe5 Bh6 13 Qxd7 Bxd7 14 Rc2 with a clear edge for White – Seirawan.
 c2) 10...a6 11 Na3 (11 Nc3 Nxf2! followed by ...Qxc7 and Black is better) 11...Nc6 12 0-0! Bb7 (12...Qxc7 13 Bd5 Nf6 14 Bxc6 Rb8 15 Ne5 left White with a clear advantage in Portisch-Tukmakov, Biel 1996) 13 Bb6. This position has been reached in some games. The best way to continue is probably 13...Rab8, but it is questionable whether Black has enough for the pawn.

8 Bxc4 Nh5!

The start of an advance on the dark squares.

9 Be3 Bxf3 10 gxf3 e5! 11 dxe5 Bxe5

This equalises; there is no reason why Black should be any worse here. On the other hand, one game continued 11...Qh4?! 12 Bxf7+!! (Diagram 9)

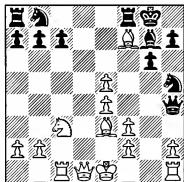


Diagram 9
White uncorks a stunner

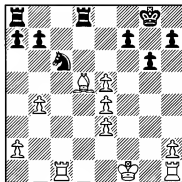


Diagram 10
A strange pawn formation

12...Rxf7 13 e6 Rf8 14 Qb3 Nc6 15 e7+ Kh8 16 exf8Q+ Rxf8 17 Kd2 Nd4 18 Bxd4 Bxd4 19 Kc2 b6 20 Kb1 Qxf2 21 Rhf1 and White was close to winning, Bosboom-Finkel, Dieren 1997.

12 Qxd8

12 Qb3?! Nc6 13 Qxb7 Qf6 looks very dangerous for White.

12...Rxd8 13 b4?!

White is trying to prove an advantage somehow, but this is not really justified. Sometimes our desire is stronger than our objective judgement. Surely Lputian knew that this was stretching things, but sometimes risks need to be taken, and you don't always know if they are sound or not.

Normal is 13 0-0 Nd7 14 Rfd1 Nb6 15 Bb3 Nf4 16 Kf1 e6 with equality, Novikov-Horvath, Nova Gorica 1997.

13...Nf4! 14 Nd5

After 14 0-0 Nc6! Black is doing fine.

14...Ng2+ 15 Kf1

Or 15 Ke2 c6! 16 Ne7+ Kf8 17 Bc5 Nf4+ 18 Ke3 Ke8 followed by 19...Nd7, when White's knight is in trouble.

15...Nxe3+ 16 fxe3 c6 17 f4

17 Nf4 was probably a better chance, although even after 17...Bxf4 18 exf4 Rd2 19 Ke1 Rb2 Black has a more pleasant position.

17...cxd5 18 Bxd5 Nc6 19 fxe5 (Diagram 10)

After 19 Bxc6 bxc6 20 fxe5 Rd2 the control over the seventh rank will give Black good winning chances. It's also difficult for the h1-rook to come into play.

19...Nxb4

Less energetic is 19...Nxe5 20 Ke2 Rd7, when White has good drawing chances.

20 Bb3

After 20 Bxb7 Rab8 21 Rc7 Rd2 Black is close to winning (Ivanchuk). Also, 20 e6 Nxd5 21 exf7+ Kxf7 22 exd5 Rxd5 23 Rc7+ Ke6 does not work for White. Following 24 Rxh7 Rd2 25 Rxb7 Rxa2, Black's a-pawn is enormously strong.

20...Rd2 21 Rc7 Rf8

21...Nd3 22 Bxf7+ Kh8 23 e6! gives White counterplay.

22 Rg1

White is also lost after 22 Rxb7 Rc8 23 Ke1 Rb2 24 Rd7 Rc1+ 25 Bd1 Nxa2.

22...Na6 23 Ke1 Rb2!

After 23...Rxa2? 24 Rxf7 Ra1+ 25 Ke2 Rxf7 26 Rf1+! the position is suddenly not so clear anymore.

24 Rc3

Or 24 Rxb7 Nc5! and White is lost because of 25 Bxf7+ Rxf7 26 Rxb2 Nd3+!

24...b6!

Preparing ...Nc5.

25 e6?! Rb1+ 26 Kf2 fxe6+ 27 Kg2 Rxc1+ 28 Kxc1 Nc5 29 Kg2 Kg7

Coming to e5, where it will dominate the position. White can do nothing to prevent this.

30 Rc2 Kf6 31 Rf2+ Ke7 32 Rc2 Kd6 33 Rd2+ Ke5 34 Bc2 Rf7 0-1

Game 38

□ Babula ■ Kasparov

Prague (Simultaneous Display) 2001

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g3 3 Nc3 d5 4 Nf3 Bg7 5 Bf4 0-0 6 Rc1 dxc4 7 e3 Be6!?

As strong as and more competitive than the alternative 7...c5. After 8 Bxc4 cxd4 9 Nxd4 (9 exd4 Bg4 looks fine) Black should play 9...Bd7!, preparing the natural development of the knight to c6. Now White has tried 10 0-0 Nc6 11 Nb3 Na5 with equality (Dreev-Krasenkow, Dos Hermanas 2001), and 10 Nb3 Nc6 11 Nc5 Bc8 12 0-0 Nd7 13 N5e4 Nde5 with no problems at all for Black (Dreev-Smirin, Sarajevo 2001).

8 Ng5 Bd5 9 e4 h6!

This is of course the move Black has been counting on. Now White cannot retreat with the knight, as e4 would be hanging.

10 exd5 hxg5 11 Bxg5 b5!? (Diagram 11)

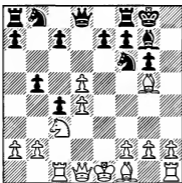


Diagram 11

11...b5: typically Kasparov

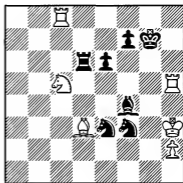


Diagram 12

White's king is in trouble

Kasparov is true to his style and chooses the most radical solution to his opening problems. Also completely sound seems to be 11...Nxd5 12 Bxc4 Nb6 13 Bb3 Nc6!. Notice that 13...Bxd4?! 14 Nb5! would be unnecessarily risky.

12 Qf3 c6!

Kasparov's new idea. Previously Black had fared well with 12...Nbd7 and 12...b4, so it is not completely clear why a novelty was needed. However, the move chosen by Kasparov looks enormously healthy and will probably be the starting point for further discussions in this line, or simply the end of the discussion.

13 dxc6 Qxd4 14 Be2

14 c7 Qe5+! 15 Be3 Na6 and Black has no problems.

14...a6 15 0-0 Qc5 16 Be3 Qxc6 17 a4!

White has to destroy the black pawn chain.

17...e6 18 axb5 axb5 19 Nxb5 Ra2

Black still needs to play accurately, but the reward should be a completely level middlegame.

20 Qxc6 Nxc6 21 Bc5 Rb8 22 Bxc4 Rxb2 23 Bd6 Rb6 24 Nc3 Na5 25 Na4 Bh6!

Black has equalised. Now White should learn to live with the draw. Instead he took unnecessary risks and dangerously weakened his position.

26 f4?!

26 Nxb6 Rxb6 27 Ba3 Bxc1 28 Rxc1 Nxc4 29 Rxc4 Nd5 30 g3 with a draw offer was a logical conclusion to the game.

26...Rxc2+! 27 Kxc2 Rxd6 28 Bb5 Nb3 29 Rc6 Rd8 30 f5 gxf5 31 Rxf5 Ng4!?

31...exf5 32 Rxf6 Bg7 33 Rxf5 Nd4 34 Rh5 Ra8 35 Bd7 f5 36 Nc5 Ra2+ 37 Kf1 would lead to a draw.

32 Rh5 Nd4 33 Rc3 Ne3+ 34 Kh3 Bf4 35 Ba6

White is running short of time and also has a really unpleasant defence. After 35 Rd3 Rd6 36 Ba6 Nf3 37 Rxd6 Ng1+! 38 Kh4 Ng2+ 39 Kg4 f5+ 40 Rxf5 exf5+ 41 Kxf5 Bxd6 Black has the chances, but can this position be won? Probably not against a decent defence; the opposite-coloured bishops are a strong defensive resource here.

35...Kg7 36 Rc8 Rd6 37 Nc5 Nf3 38 Bd3 (Diagram 12)

38 Nd3 Ng1+ 39 Kh4 Ng2+ 40 Kg4 f5+ 41 Rxf5 exf5+ 42 Kxf5 Rf6+ 43 Ke4 Rxa6 44 Nxf4 Ra4+ 45 Kd3 Nxf4+ and Black wins.

38...Rd4 39 Rh7+ Kf6 40 Ne4+ Rxe4

Time trouble. Simpler was 40...Kg6! 41 Nc5+ Rxd3 42 Nxd3 (42 Rg7+ Kxc7 43 Nxd3 Ng1+ 44 Kh4 Bxh2 wins) 42...Ng1+ 43 Kh4 Ng2+ 44 Kg4 f5 mate.

41 Bxe4 Ng5+ 42 Kh4 Nxe4 43 Rf8 Ng5 44 Kh5?!

A blunder of course, but even after 44 Rhh8 Bxh2 White will not survive.

44...Nxb7 0-1

White Plays Bg5

As with Bf4, there are two versions of the Bg5 lines, one with and one without the move 4 Nf3 inserted. Again this is not just a matter of transposition, even though the versions are more similar than those in the previous sections. Black only has one serious reply to the move Bc1-g5, which is ...Nf6-e4, hitting the bishop and thus often gaining a tempo.

These lines are not so frequently played by the top players as those discussed in the previous chapters, mainly because nobody really believes that there is any chance for an advantage here. Still, there are some strong grandmasters like Curt Hansen and Beliavsky who like the oddity of the variations and employ them from time to time with relative success. Even though it's mainly a surprise weapon at the top level, it could perfectly well be a steady part of someone's repertoire once we get below a 2600 rating.

The opening moves are as follows:

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 Nf3

For the immediate 4 Bg5, see Game 39.

4...Bg7 5 Bg5 Ne4 (Diagram 13)

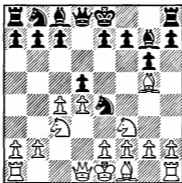


Diagram 13
Hitting the g5-bishop

Really the only move that can be taken seriously. 5...0-0!? (?) would transpose to a gambit known from the King's Indian, but we have no reason to concern ourselves with that here.

After 5...Ne4 White has two main moves. We look at 6 Bh4 in Game 40, while cxd5 is the subject of Game 41.

NOTE: White does not win a pawn after 6 Nxd5?? because after 6...Nxc5 7 Nxc5 e6 one of the knights will have to go.



Statistics

4 Bg5 Ne4 5 Bh4: In 692 games White has a record of 55%, winning 37% of the games, drawing 36% and losing 27%. Nothing special, just a typical score.

4 Nf3 Bg7 5 Bg5 Ne4 6 Bh4: White has a score of 58% over 608 games. This might sound pleasing for White, but once we move to Black's best continuation, 6...Nxc3 7 bxc3 dxc4, White's score decreases to 53%, winning 34%, drawing 37% and losing 29%.

4 Nf3 Bg7 5 Bg5 Ne4 6 cxd5 Nxc3 7 Nxc3 e6 8 Qd2: White's score here is 54% over 790 games, winning 34% of the games, drawing 39% of them and losing 27%. Again, a decent record for Black.

Theoretical?

Lines with Bg5 shouldn't be regarded as completely harmless, as there are some dangers if you are not really aware of what you are doing. These can range from simply forgetting that castling can cost the e-pawn to more elaborate traps and tricks. All in all, this variation gets a 'moderate' stamp under the theoretical question.

Game 39

□ C.Hansen ■ Krasenkow

Esbjerg 2003

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 Bg5 Ne4 5 Bh4

5 Nxe4 is possible here since there is no knight on f3 to be irritated by the pawn on e4. Even so, it is not a very strong option, as White has no logical way to develop. 5...dxe4 6 Qd2 Bg7 7 e3 c5 8 Ne2 Nc6 9 d5 Ne5 10 Nc3 f5 gave unclear play in Mikhalchishin-Jelen, Slovenia 2002.

5...c5

The simplest way to go for equality here is with 5...Nxc3 6 bxc3 dxc4, when it is difficult for White to prove any advantage. Here he can reach positions similar to Game 40 with 7 Qa4+, or play something along the lines of 7 e3 Be6 8 Nf3 Bg7 9 Be2 b5 10 a4 c6 11 Ng5 Bd5 12 e4 h6 13 exd5 hxg5 14 Bxg5 cxd5 15 axb5 Nd7 16 Bf3 Bf6 17 Bf4 e6 18 0-0 Bg5 19 Bg3 Bh4 20 Bd6 Be7 21 Bg3 Bh4, when a draw was agreed in C.Hansen-McShane, Esbjerg 2003. Black is never close to being worse in this kind of position, unless he loses his sense of reality and starts to dream that he is actually better.

6 e3 Qa5

This line seems suspicious. Black could still equalise with the common 6...Nxc3 7 bxc3 Bg7 8 cxd5 Qxd5 9 Nf3.

7 Qb3 cxd4 8 exd4 Bh6?!

Black's play is way too inventive. But Krasenkow is a player who is fond of slightly unusual chess, in the same way as the late English grandmaster Tony Miles.

9 Rd1! dxc4 10 Bxc4 Nd6 11 Nf3 Nc6?? (Diagram 14)



Diagram 14
A bizarre mistake

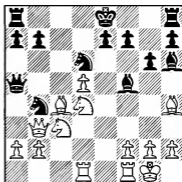


Diagram 15
The fight is all but over

A strange blunder from a strong grandmaster; now Black will never have time to get his king into safety because of the e7-pawn. Still, after the necessary 11...0-0 12 0-0 Nxc4 13 Qxc4 e6 14 d5 White has the advantage beyond any question.

12 d5 Nb4 13 0-0 Bf5 14 Nd4 (Diagram 15)

White has clearly won the opening battle. The knight on b4 looks lost and the e7-pawn is like a wound.

14...Qc5

Necessary was 14...Bd7 15 Rfe1 g5, but after 16 Bg3 White has a winning attack.

15 Be2 Bg7 16 Ncb5 Nxb5

16...Bxd4 was last try to save the game, but White wins after 17 Rxd4! a5 18 Nxd6+ Qxd6 19 a3 Nc6 20 Qa4 Bc2 21 Qxc2 Nxd4 22 Qa4+.

17 Bxb5+ Kf8 18 Rfe1 e5 19 Nxf5 gxf5 20 d6 e4

Or 20...Qxb5 21 d7 and the pawn will queen.

21 d7 Bd4 22 Qc4 1-0

White wins at least a piece.

Game 40

□ Lautier ■ Ivanchuk

Terrassa 1991

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 Nf3 Bg7 5 Bg5 Ne4 6 Bh4!? Nxc3 7 bxc3 dxc4 8 Qa4+ (Diagram 16)

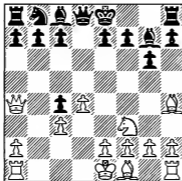


Diagram 16
The safe way

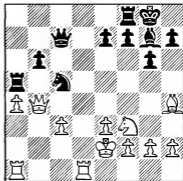


Diagram 17
Activity greater than the pawn

This is the safest line: White regains the pawn and has a very sound pawn structure. However, Black has easy development and is able to create sufficient counterplay against White's centre.

8 e3! is an interesting gambit. White has compensation, but just how much is far from obvious, for example 8...b5 9 a4 c6 10 Nd2 a6 11 Be2 Ra7 12 0-0 0-0 13 Bf3 Rd7 14 Qb1 Qc7 15 Ne4 Rdd8 with chances for both sides, Beliavsky-Kamsky, Belgrade 1991.

8...Qd7!

Preparing the development of the bishop to a6.

9 Qxc4 b6 10 e3

This has been the only serious move in tournament practice, but it is not necessarily the only serious move in the position.

10...Ba6 11 Qb3 Bxf1 12 Kxf1 0-0

Alternatives should be considered:

a) Black was somewhat worse after 12...c5 13 d5! 0-0 14 Rd1 e5 15 dxe6 Qxe6 16 Qxe6 fxe6 17 c4 (Grivas-Schmidt, Novi Sad 1990), but 14...e5 was not the only move in the position and it is possible that Black could improve somewhere.

b) 12...Nc6!? 13 Ke2 Na5 14 Qb4 e6! 15 Ne5 Qd6 16 Bg3 0-0! (a strong positional sacrifice) 17 Nxg6 (17 Nxf7?! Qd5 favours Black) 17...Qxb4 18 cxb4 hxg6 19 bxa5 c5 20 Be5 cxd4 21 Bxd4 Bxd4 22 exd4 Rfd8 23 Ke3 Rd5! 24 axb6 axb6 25 Rhb1 was agreed drawn in Beliavsky-Ivanchuk, Linares 1991. Even if White manages to exchange a- for b-pawn and a pair of rooks, there are no real winning chances. The point is, of course, that Black has no h-pawn, the worst pawn in rook endgames.

13 Ke2 c5 14 dxc5

This decision looks suspicious. White wins a pawn, but the weakness of his a- and c-pawns are much more important than the weakness of black's b-pawn, so potentially Black can end up a pawn ahead. 14 d5 and 14 Rhd1, with a level position, both look better.

14...Na6! 15 Rhd1

Or 15 cxb6 Nc5 16 Qc4 axb6 and Black has wonderful play for the pawn. The white queen is really not very well placed.

15...Qc7 16 cxb6 axb6 17 a4 Nc5 18 Qb4 Ra5 (Diagram 17)

According to different annotations White is still okay here, but there seems to be too much sympathy for material and too little for activity. Even the materialistic Fritz 8 does not particularly like White's position.

19 Bg3

19 Nd4!? has been suggested as an improvement, but after 19...Rfa8 Black regains his pawn with good play.

19...e5!

Limiting the activity of White's minor pieces.

20 Nd2 Rfa8 21 Nc4 Nxa4! 22 Kf1

22 Nxa5 Nxc3+ 23 Kf1 bxa5 24 Qb3 Nxd1 and Black has excellent winning chances.

22...Bf8 23 Nd6

23 Qb3 Nc5 24 Qb2 Nd3! and Black wins much material.

23...Nxc3 24 Rac1 Rc5 25 Rd3 Ne4! 0-1

Black wins after 26 Rxc5 Nxc5.

Game 41

□ Skembris ■ Smejkal

Thessaloniki Olympiad 1988

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 Nf3 Bg7 5 Bg5 Ne4! 6 cxd5 Nxc3 7 Nxc3 e6

7...c6!? is a possible variation, which is less popular and probably also slightly weaker.

8 Qd2

White is trying to ruin Black's chances of castling. It is also possible to play the position strictly positionally with 8 Nf3 exd5 9 e3, where the idea is to play b2-b4-b5 with a minority attack, just like in the Queen's Gambit Declined exchange lines.

A memorable game continued 8 Qa4+ c6 9 dxc6 Nxc6 10 Nf3 Bxd4?? 11 0-0-0 1-0 Dearing-Aagaard, Hampstead 1998. An improvement is 10...Bd7 11 Qd1 Qb6 12 Qd2 Nxd4! 13 0-0-0 Rd8 14 Nxd4 Bc6 15 e3 e5 16 Qe1 exd4 17 exd4+ Kf8 18 d5 Bxd5 19 Rxd5 Rxd5 20 Qe7+! with a draw in Shirov-Østenstad, Gausdal 1991.

8...exd5

8...Bh6!? is also possible, but hardly better than the main move.
9 Qe3+ Kf8 10 Qf4 Bf6 11 h4 h6 12 Nxd5!? (Diagram 18)

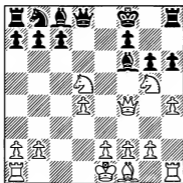


Diagram 18
A new twist

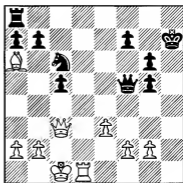


Diagram 19
Threatening Rh1+

This is a fresh idea, but it does not pose Black real problems. Still, after the standard 12 Nf3 Be6 13 e3 c6 14 0-0-0 Nd7 15 Bd3 Qb8! Black is known to have a fine position. Generally Black's only concern is with his king. There are of course a lot of possibilities in these positions, and a whole book could be used to cover 5 Bg5 alone, but not this book...

12...Bxg5 13 Qe5 Rh7 14 hxg5 Nc6 15 Qe4 Bf5 16 Qf3 Nxd4 17 Qa3+ Kg7 18 Ne3 hxg5!

Black should refrain from 18...Qxg5 19 Qc3 Qf6 20 0-0-0 c5 21 Nxf5+ Nxf5 22 Rd7 Rhh8 23 Qxf6+ Kxf6 24 g4 Nd4 25 e3 Ne6 26 Rxb7, when White was on his way to a full point in Crisan-Jacimovic, Tekija 2001.

19 Rxh7+ Kxh7 20 0-0-0 Qf6 21 Qc3 c5 22 Nxf5 Qxf5 23 e3 Nc6

One never ceases to be amazed by the possible blunders in chess. One game concluded 23...Rc8?? 24 Bd3 Qg4 25 f3 (the knight is lost; White has Kb1 and Rh1+ coming) 25...Nxf3 26 gxf3 Qxf3 27 Qe5 g4 28 Rf1 c4 29 Be2 1-0 Cifuentes Parada-Peelen, Holland 2000.

24 Ba6! (Diagram 19)

White creates sufficient counterplay based on the mating threat. After 24 Bd3 Qe5 25 Qxe5 (25 Be4 Rd8 26 Rh1+ Kg7 27 Bxc6 Qxc3+ 28 bxc6 bxc6 favours Black) 25...Nxe5 26 Be4 c4 we have something close to equality, but Black is very active, so White would have to be careful.

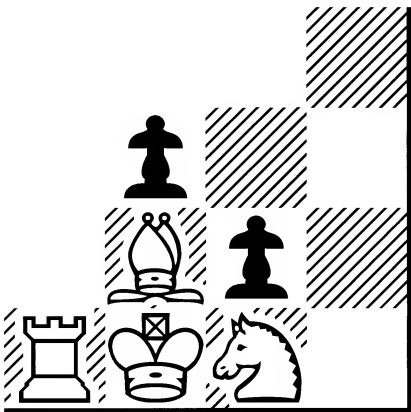
24...Kg8 25 g4!

White is ensuring a draw. After 25 Bxb7?! Nb4! 26 Qc4 Rb8 27 Bf3 g4 28 Bxg4 Qxf2 Black is better, as the white king is not really safe.

25...Qxg4 26 Qf6 bxa6 27 Qxc6 Qc4+ 28 Kb1 Rb8 29 Qf6 Qe4+ 30 Kc1 Qc4+ 31 Kb1 ½-½

Other White Systems

- White Plays e3
- White Plays g3: Black Plays ...c6 and ...d5
- White Plays g3: Black Plays..d5



White Plays e3

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 Nf3 Bg7 5 e3 (Diagram 1)

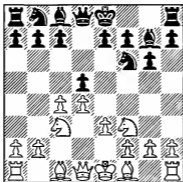


Diagram 1
White plays e3

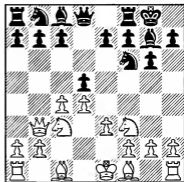


Diagram 2
The only important line

One of the most solid (or scared?) systems against the Grünfeld is 4 Nf3 Bg7 5 e3.

Hardly the refutation of Grünfeld's old idea, but e2-e3 has a very strong psychological advantage. Black players often get depressed when White plays like this, and may not play so well over the next 5-6 moves. Then White only has to find some way to strike within these moves, right? Well, actually the only kind of attack White can muster in this line is

5...0-0 6 Qb3! (Diagram 2)

White immediately grabs space on the queenside. This line, considered in Game 43, is so important that it actually merits its own Informant Code, D95. The more exotic lines like 6 b4!? (Game 42) and the dull lines like 6 Be2 are not only harmless, they also easily run the risk of giving White an inferior position, for example:

- 6 Bd2 e6 7 Rc1 Qe7 8 Be2 Rd8 9 0-0 Ne4 10 Be1 b6 was fine for Black in Kamsky-Ljubojevic, Linares 1991.
- 6 Be2 e6 7 0-0 c6 8 cxd5 exd5 9 b4 Re8 10 Bb2 b6 11 a4 Nbd7 12 b5 c5 and Black had a good position in Agdestein-Korchnoi, Tilburg 1989.
- 6 cxd5 Nxd5 7 Bc4 is a line attributed to Paul Keres. It is not considered very dangerous, but still has a sting. Black should be fine if he plays something like 7...Nb6 8 Bb3 c5 9 0-0 cxd4 10 exd4 Bg4 11 d5 N8d7 12 h3 Bxf3 13 Qxf3 Nc5 with fine counterplay, Nemet-Ekström, Leukerbad 2002.

Statistics

Without 6 Qb3: White scores 45% over 2965 games, winning a 'staggering' 26% of the games, drawing 37% and losing 37%. There is no statistical uncertainty here. This is simply a horrible score for White.

6 Qb3: This is the only line that fares well statistically. White has a score of 53% over 585 games (35% wins, 37 draws and 28% losses), slightly less than average. So the system is not harmless, but certainly not dangerous either.

Theoretical?

Without 6 Qb3: Come on!

6 Qb3: Unless you are aspiring for an international title, you should be able to get by with the simple set-up employed by such a strong player as English grandmaster Luke McShane. See Game 43 for details.

Game 42

□ Miles ■ Korchnoi

Brussels 1986

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 Nf3 Bg7 5 e3 0-0 6 b4!?

This move is both ambitious and double-edged. In the game Korchnoi finds good counterplay by blasting open White's centre.

6...b6!

This makes a lot of sense. Black was prevented from playing ...c5 here, but now when he achieves it, the position will be wide open with White's king still in the centre.

6...c6 7 a4 Bg4 8 Qb3 Bxf3 9 gxf3 e6 10 Ba3 Nbd7 11 f4 Re8 gave an unclear and interesting game in Rustemov-Kozul, Halkidiki 2002.

7 Bb2

The value of this move can definitely be discussed.

7...c5!

The plan is carried out.

8 bxc5

As we shall see, it is Black who benefits most from the opening of the b-file. But there is not really any way back for White.

8...bxc5 9 dxc5

This was also not strictly necessary.

9...Na6!

The correct way of attacking White's shattered centre. It might seem that both sides' development is more or less equal, but White has a weak king and soon ends up in a horrible series of pins.

10 c6?

Reckless. The pawn itself is of less importance than the c5-square. Also, 9...Na6 might have attacked the c-pawn, but most importantly it vacated the b8-square for the rook. Now Black takes over the initiative.

Alternatively:

a) 10 Nxd5 Nxd5 11 Bxg7 Nxe3 12 fxe3 Kxg7 gives Black excellent counterplay. He will eventually pick up the c-pawn and will then have a structural advantage.

b) 10 cxd5!? seems very dangerous, but actually works out after 10...Nxd5 11 Nxd5 Bxb2 12 Rb1 Rb8 (12...Bg7!? looks very optimistic, but might prove to be strong) 13 Qd2! (13 Bxa6? Bxa6 14 c6 Qa5+ 15 Qd2 Qxa2 and White is lost; his king simply cannot escape from the centre) 13...e6 14 Rxb2 Rxb2 15 Qxb2 Qxd5 16 Be2 Nxc5 17 0-0 with an even game.

c) 10 Be2 Rb8 11 Nb5! Nxc5 12 Be5 Rb7 13 0-0 also keeps the balance. 10...Ne4 11 Nd4

Now White's position is difficult to defend. 11 Rc1 Rb8 12 Ba1 is very dangerous for White. After 12...Qa5 White is in trouble as 13 cxd5? loses to 13...Nxc3 14 Qd2 Qa3 15 Bxc3 Rb1!!, when c3 cannot be defended. After 12 cxd5? Qa5 13 Ba1 Nxc3 14 Qd2 Qa3 Black wins in the same way.

11...Rb8 12 Qc1

Also very unpleasant is 12 cxd5 Rxb2 13 Nxe4 Qxd5 14 Rb1 Rxb1 15 Qxb1 Bxd4 16 exd4 Nb4! and White does not have any good moves. After 17 Be2 Nxc6 Black will simply be a pawn up.

12...Qa5 (Diagram 3)

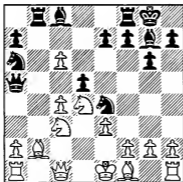


Diagram 3

Black's threats mount up

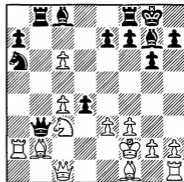


Diagram 4

White's king goes on a walk

13 f3 Nec5! 14 Nb3

14 cxd5? Bxd4! 15 exd4 Na4 14 Qd2!? dxc4 15 Bxc4 Rd8 is very uncomfortable for White. Black has ideas like ...e5 and ...Rxb2 followed by ...Na4, and White cannot save himself: 16 Rb1 e5 17 Nd5 (17 Ncb5 Qxd2+ 18 Kxd2 Be6! and Black wins) 17...Qxd2+ 18 Kxd2 exd4 19 exd4 Be6 20 Bxa6 Nxa6 21 c7 Nxc7 22 Nxc7 Bxa2 and Black wins material.

14...Qb4 15 Kf2

White is lost, for example 15 cxd5 Na4 16 Kd2 Rd8 17 e4 Bh6+.

15...Nxb3 16 axb3 Qxb3 17 Ra2 d4! (Diagram 4)

Completely opening up White's position. The overdrawn end to the game is reminiscent of a cat playing with the trapped mouse. Only here for some reason it is the mouse that wants to play.

18 exd4 Bxd4+ 19 Kg3 Be5+ 20 Kh4 f6 21 Qd2 Nc7 22 Ba1 Ne6 23 Nd5 g5+ 24 Kh5 Ng7+ 25 Kh6 Nf5+ 26 Kh5 Qb1 27 Bd3 Qxh1 27...Ng3+! would have won instantly.

28 Bxe5 fxe5 29 h3 Ng7+ 30 Kxg5 Qh2 31 Qe1 Rf6 32 Bxh7+ Kxh7 33 Qh4+ Kg8 34 Nxf6+ exf6+ 35 Kg6 Bf5+ 36 Kxf6 Rf8+ 37 Ke7 Qg1 38 Qf2 Qc1 39 Kd6 Qxc4 40 c7 Rf6+ 0-1

Game 43

□ Yusupov ■ Carlsen

Copenhagen 2003.

1 d4 Nf6 2 Nf3 g6 3 c4 Bg7 4 Nc3 d5 5 e3 0-0 6 Qb3

This variation is a favourite of Yusupov, who has used it with great success for the many years. It does not promise any chances for a real advantage, but it does give a position where his greater experience and talent for strategic depth can outmatch most opponents'. This game plus all those given in the notes were played within three weeks and a 30-mile radius!

6...e6!

This seems to be the best solution. The position in some respect reminds me of the Queen's Gambit Exchange Variation, but with White's dark-squared bishop stuck inside its own pawn chain.

The exchange 6...dxc4 seems a bit suspicious. When asked about this line Yusupov compared it to the Russian System. 'Why not recapture with the bishop on c4 if possible?' was his question. Well, the drawback of this system is that the c1-bishop is not going anywhere, while the advantage is that Black cannot obtain the dynamic play he wants. So if Black allows the c1-bishop out, he might soon find himself in trouble, as he did after 7 Bxc4 c5 8 d5 Nbd7 9 e4 Ng4 (9...Nb6 10 0-0! and White is better) 10 0-0 Qb6 11 h3 Nge5 12 Nxe5 Qxb3 13 Bxb3 Nxe5 14 Rd1 c4 15 Be2 b6 16 Be3 e6 17 f4, when White was much better, Yusupov-Nilssen, Copenhagen 2003.

Very solid and clearly not bad is 6...c6 7 cxd5 cxd5. It is possible to argue that the g7-bishop is somewhat strangely placed in this struc-

ture, but in Yusupov-Jakobsen, Copenhagen 2003 Black had no troubles getting it activated, thereby solving his opening problems: 8 Be2 e6 9 0-0 Nc6 10 Bd2 Ne8 11 Rfc1 Nd6 12 Na4 Ne4 13 Nc5 Nxd2 14 Nxd2 Qe7 15 Bb5 e5 16 Bxc6 bxc6 17 Qa4 Rb8 18 Ndb3 Rb6 and Black had kept the balance.

7 Bd2 b6 8 cxd5 exd5 9 Be2 Bb7 10 0-0 Nbd7 11 Rfd1 c6 12 a4 a5 13 Rac1 Re8 14 Ne1 Bf8 15 Nd3 Bd6

All of these developing moves are very natural. However, two weeks later Black improved with 15...Ba6!. Now White will have to either accept the exchange of the light-squared bishops, or refrain from playing Ne5. Probably the latter possibility is preferable. Black was soon better after 17 Ne5 Bxe2 18 Nxe2 Nxe5 19 fxe5 Ne4 20 Be1 Bh6 21 Ng3 Ng5 22 Rc3 Ne6 23 Bf2 c5, Jakobsen-McShane, Malmö 2003.

16 f4 Qe7?

16...Ba6! is an improvement. See the note to Black's previous move.

17 Ne5 Bb4 18 Bf3 (Diagram 5)

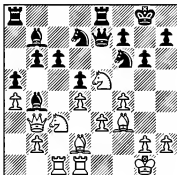


Diagram 5
A dream position

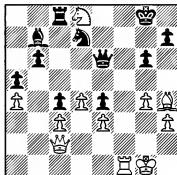


Diagram 6
Deep in enemy territory

This is the kind of position that Yusupov dreamt of. Black has no active plans on either side of the board, and White will not slowly move his army to the kingside, where it will provide great hostility upon instruction. Secondly, Yusupov has a love for the Stonewall system. He is always seeking it with both colours, and right so. His score with it and his understanding of its principles are amazing.

18...Rac8 19 Be1 Qe6 20 Bh4 c5 21 h3

White should not let himself be tempted. After 21 Nxd7 Nxd7 22 Nxd5 c4! 23 f5 gxf5 24 Rxc4 Bxd5 25 Bxd5 Qxd5 26 Rxb4 Qe4 Black wins a piece.

21...c4 22 Qc2

Black's position is probably still defensible at this point, but it is very hard to find a good plan.

22...Be7 23 Rf1 Bb4

A clear sign that Black cannot find his way.

24 g4 Bxc3 25 bxc3 Ne4 26 f5! Qd6

26...gxf5? loses to 27 gxf5 Qxf5 28 Qg2+ Kh8 29 Bxe4 dxe4 30 Nxd7 Qxd7 31 Bf6 mate.

27 Bxe4 dxe4 28 fxe6 fxe6 29 Nf7! Qe6 30 Nh6+ Kh8 31 Rf7 Rf8

The only move. But White has another rook coming.

32 Rf1 Rxf7

Losing by force, but Black is short of alternatives. After 32...Bd5!? White wins with 33 Qh2! with the threat of 34 Bf6+ Nxf6 35 R1xf6.

33 Nxf7+ Kg8 34 Nd8! (Diagram 6)

Blocking out the black rook.

34...Qd5 35 Qf2

Black has no way to improve his position. Now the queen proceeds to the most deadly square.

35...Bc6 36 Qf4 b5 37 axb5 Bxb5 38 Qh6

The threat of 39 Rf7 decides the game.

38...Rxd8 39 Bxd8 Qd6 40 Kg2 a4 41 Ba5 1-0

White Plays g3: Black Replies with ...c6 and ...d5

The final two sections deal with a type of position that does not arise from the usual move order. After 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6, white omits Nc3 in favour of 3 Nf3 Bg7 and now 4 g3 0-0 5 Bg2 (Diagram 7)

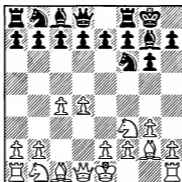


Diagram 7
White plays g3

Here Black can still choose to go into the King's Indian with 5...d6, or he can remain in the Grünfeld with either 5...d5 (see the following section) or

5...c6

followed by 6...d5. There are many different move orders but they are not so important. For Black the important question is what kind of variation he would like to play. With 5...c6 followed by ...d5 he chooses the ultra solid approach, where he is always be prepared to meet White's cxd5 with ...cxd5.

Statistics

Lines with ...c6 and ...d5 are covered by *ECO* codes D78-79. In the 7124 games we find there, White scores a good 58%. The solidity of the system is shown by the win, draw, loss ratio, with White winning only 34%, drawing 47%, but losing a mere 19% – one of the worst victory rates for Black in this book.

Theoretical?

It's true you need to know something, but not everything. Common sense is the most useful tool in these lines.

Game 44

R.Byrne Fischer

New York 1963

This brilliant game is not included because it is specifically important theoretically, but simply because it shows the hidden dynamics of Black's set-up.

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 g3 c6 4 Bg2 d5 5 cxd5 cxd5 6 Nc3 Bg7 7 e3

The move order to this game has been a little untraditional, but only here does the game really deviate from the main lines. After 7 Nf3 we would find ourselves in Game 45. The move played in this game does not promise White any advantage at all.

7...0-0 8 Nge2 Nc6 9 0-0 b6 10 b3

10 Nf4 e6 11 b3 Ba6 12 Re1 Rc8 13 Ba3 Re8 14 Rc1 was completely level in Ståhlberg-Flohr, Kemerli 1937.

10...Ba6 11 Ba3 Re8

Strangely enough, Black is already close to having a slightly better position. The problem for White is that the g2-bishop cannot really get into the game, and it also matters that it cannot protect d3. It is too late for 12 Nf4, as the f1-rook would be hanging.

12 Qd2

It is very hard to solve White's problems. After 12 Re1 he might seem better prepared for 12...e5!? 13 dxe5 Nxe5, but there is still no easy way for White to keep his position together, for example:

- a) 14 Nxd5 Nxd5 15 Bxd5 Nd3 16 Bxa8 Qxa8 17 Qd2 Qe4! with a deadly attack on the light squares.
- b) 14 Nf4 Rc8 15 Ncxd5 Nxd5 16 Qxd5 Nd3 17 Nxd3 Qxd5 18 Bxd5 Bxa1 and the endgame is close to hopeless for White.
- c) 14 Nd4 is relatively best. The idea is to meet 14...Nd3 with 15 Bf1!, when White is still in the game. However, after 14...Qd7 15 Rc1 Rac8 White has a very unpleasant position.

The solution to the problem is 13 Qd2!?, when White is only a little worse.

12...e5!

Black takes over the initiative.

13 dxe5

13 Rac1 exd4 14 exd4 Rc8 followed by ...Ne4 would give Black a good game.

13...Nxe5 14 Rfd1?

Strangely, it seems that White is lost after this natural-looking move. The problem with the text move is, of course, that it weakens the f2-square and allows the upcoming combination.

14 Rad1! was better, after which the position is rather unclear.

14...Nd3! 15 Qc2

Or:

a) 15 Nd4 Ne4 16 Nxe4 dxe4 with a great game for Black.

b) A convincing line is 15 Nf4 Ne4 16 Nxe4 dxe4 17 Rab1 Rc8 18 Nxd3 Bc3! 19 Qe2 Bxd3 20 Qg4 f5 21 Qh3 Bxb1! 22 Rxd8 Rxd8 23 Bf1 Rd1 24 Kg2 Bd3! 25 Bxd3 exd3 and Black wins, as mentioned by several sources.

Now comes one of the most famous attacks in the history of chess.

15...Nxf2! (Diagram 8)

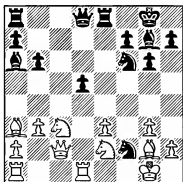


Diagram 8
A famous sacrifice

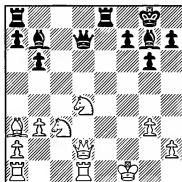


Diagram 9
A premature resignation?

A typical sacrifice. White's kingside is completely destroyed.

16 Kxf2 Ng4+ 17 Kg1 Nxe3 18 Qd2 Nxc2!

A natural decision for a top player of the modern age, but maybe surprising for some at the time the game was played. The bishop was the only piece that protected White's king, which is now completely open. The rook on a1 (18...Nxd1 19 Rxd1 would in fact exchange the rook on a1, not d1) is irrelevant for the short-term evaluation of the position.

19 Kxc2 d4!

Black opens up for his bishops.

20 Nxd4 Bb7+ 21 Kf1

21 Kg1 loses on the spot to 21...Bxd4+ 22 Qxd4 Re1+, when Black will end up an exchange ahead. 21 Kf2 is strongly met by 21...Qd7! 22 Rac1 Bxd4+ 23 Qxd4 Qf5+ 24 Kg1 (or 24 Qf4 Qh3 and it is all over) 24...Qf3 25 Nd5 Bxd5 26 Qxd5 Re1+ 27 Rxe1 Qxd5 and White will never hold.

21...Qd7! 0-1 (Diagram 9)

To the great regret of the chess fans, Byrne decided to call it a day here, not allowing Black to finish the game in style with 22 Qf2 Qh3+ 23 Kg1 Re1+!! 24 Rxe1 Bxd4.

Game 45

□ Gelfand ■ Van Wely

European Team Championship, Leon 2001

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 g3 c6 4 Bg2 d5 5 cxd5 cxd5 6 Nc3 Bg7 7 Nf3 0-0

7...Nc6 is of course also possible. But after 8 0-0 0-0 9 Ne5! Black's position has a reputation for being somewhat uncomfortable, even though various sources claim that it is fully playable.

8 Ne5

White plays this in the hope of transposing into the previous note. The problem is that after 8 0-0 Ne4! Black has a completely fine position. White has tried the following moves (amongst others):

- 9 Ne5 Nxc3 10 bxc3 Nc6 11 Nxc6 bxc6 12 Qa4 Qb6 13 Ba3 Qa6 14 Qxa6 Bxa6 15 Rfb1 Bxe2 16 Bxe7 Rfb8 with a drawish position, Smejkal-Mariotti, Milan 1975.
- 9 Qb3 Nc6 10 Rd1 Na5 11 Qb4 Nxc3 12 Qxc3 Bf5 with complete equality, Donner-Botvinnik, Palma de Mallorca 1967.
- 9 Nxe4 dxe4 10 Ne5 Nd7! (10...Qd5!? is also playable) looks like a very radical way to solve Black's opening problems. By sacrificing a pawn he creates rapid development and obtains full compensation: 11 Nxd7 Bxd7 12 Bxe4 Bh3 13 Bxb7 Rb8 14 Bg2 Bxg2 15 Kxc2 Bxd4 16 f3 was agreed drawn in Vaganian-Svidler, Mainz 2002 (if anybody is better here, it is Black). Note that 16 Rb1 does not work because of 16...Qd5+ 17 f3 Qxa2 and Black has a clear advantage. After 18

Qxd4?! Qxb1 19 Bh6 Qxb2 20 Qxb2 Rxb2 21 Bxf8 Kxf8 Black has serious winning chances in the endgame.

8...e6!

This move is considered best. Black overprotects d5 and prepares to eliminate the white knight on e5.

9 0-0 Nfd7

9...Nc6 10 Nxc6 bxc6 would create weaknesses on the c-file give White a slight pull.

10 f4 (Diagram 10)

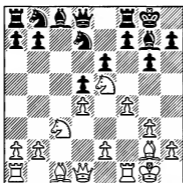


Diagram 10
Supporting e5

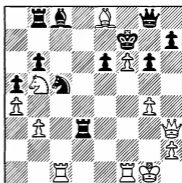


Diagram 11
Round the back

10...Nb6?!

The experienced and friendly English GM Peter Wells writes about this move: 'I find this move strange, and given how quickly Black finds himself in very real difficulties, I am rather inclined to lay the blame here initially.'

After 10...Nc6 11 Be3 Nb6, which is the main line here, it is difficult for White to claim an advantage because Black has fine play on the queenside. Note that taking on c6 is less attractive now. With the black knight on b6 and the white bishop on e3, White no longer has Nc3-a4 controlling c5 and Bc1-a3 with pressure on this diagonal. A practical example after 11...Nb6 continues 12 Bf2 Ne7 13 e4 dxe4 14 Nxe4 Nbd5 15 Qb3 b6 16 Qa3 a5 17 Rfe1 Ra7 18 Rac1 Nb4 19 Qb3 Rc7 20 a3 Nbd5 21 Nc3 Bb7 22 Nb5 Rxc1 23 Rxc1 Ba8 24 Rc4, when a draw was agreed in Nikolic-Svidler, Bundesliga 2002. White is slightly more active, but in this kind of position the long-term chances lie with Black because of the structural advantages.

11 b3 f6 12 Nd3 Rf7 13 a4 Nc6 14 e3 Rb8 15 g4!?

With the idea of f4-f5. 15 Ba3, with a slight plus, was also possible.

15...a5 16 Ba3 Bf8 17 Bc5 Kg7 18 Rc1

White is bringing all his pieces into play. 18 f5?! overreaches after 18...exf5 19 Bxb6 Qxb6 20 Nxd5 Qd8 21 gxf5 Bxf5 22 e4 Bc8, when the absence of the bishop can be a long-term problem for White.

18...Bxc5?!

18...f5 with a passive but enduring position was preferable.

19 dxc5! Na8

19...Nd7 20 Nb5 Re7 21 g5 also looks very unpleasant for Black. Soon White will play e3-e4 and open the position for his much better placed pieces.

20 Nb5 Nc7 21 Qe1

Stronger was 21 g5! fxc5 22 fxc5, when White is in complete control of events.

21...Na6

21...b6!? should have been tried. Now White opens the position to his advantage.

22 e4 dxe4?!

22...b6 was still the best chance.

23 Bxe4 Rd7 24 Qc3! b6

That Black is under a great pressure can be seen from the following line: 24...Kg8 25 Rce1 f5 26 gxf5 gxf5 27 Re2 Ne7 28 Rg2+ Ng6 29 Ne5! fxe4 30 Nxc6. Black is now forced to play the sad and ultimately hopeless 30...Rg7, as White wins in an attack after 30...hxg6 31 Rxc6+ Kh7 32 Kh1! Kxc6 33 Rg1+ Kf7 34 Qg7+ Ke8 35 Qg8+ Ke7 36 Rg7+ Kf6 37 Rf7+ Rxf7 38 Qg5 mate!

25 Ne5!

This little combination finishes Black off completely. 25 Bxc6?? Rxd3 would be a serious blunder.

25...Nxe5

25...fxe5 26 Bxc6 is very different from the previous note because now White has 27 Qxe5+ with a winning position.

26 fxe5 Nxc5

Or 26...f5 27 c6! and White wins.

27 exf6+ Kf7 28 Qh3 Qg8 29 Bc6 Rd3

Now it is time for a sensational finish.

30 Be8+!! (Diagram 11)

Black's defence is so fragile that this move completely ruins it.

30...Kxe8 31 f7+ Qxf7 32 Nd6+!

A very important point. In a few moves the two rooks will find themselves unable to protect each other.

32...Rxd6 33 Rxf7 Kxf7 34 Qxh7+ Ke8 35 Qc7! Rd4 36 Qxb8 Kd7 37 h3 0-1

White Plays g3: Black Replies with ...d5

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nf3 Bg7 4 g3 0-0 5 Bg2 d5 (Diagram 12)

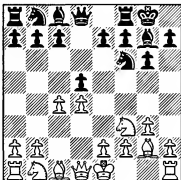


Diagram 12
A more dynamic try

If Black wants a more dynamic position, he should choose the immediate ...d5 without the support of ...c6. Now White can either capture on d5 (see Game 47) or allow Black to capture on c4 (see Game 46). Both lines have their own merits and can be recommended for Black.

Statistics

6 0-0 dxc4 7 Na3: White has scored a standard 55% over 1373 games (33% wins, 43% draws and 24% losses).

6 cxd5 Nxd5 7 0-0 Nb6: Here White scores 53% over 2359 games. The draw ratio is quite high (43%), while White wins 32% and loses 25%. These are normal scores that Black should be quite happy with.

Theoretical?

More so than the lines with ...c7-c6 in the previous section. Generally this goes for positions where the struggle is of a dynamic and not structural character.

Game 46

□ Nikolic ■ Belov
Istanbul 2003

1 Nf3 d5 2 g3 g6 3 Bg2 Bg7 4 d4 Nf6 5 0-0 0-0 6 c4 dxc4

Compared to 6...c6, this is more in line with the usual Grünfeld positions, where Black counters White's centre with active piece play and the c-pawn.

7 Na3 c3

This has been the main move for a long time, but Black has two reasonable alternatives:

a) 7...Nc6!? 8 Nxc4 Be6 9 b3 Bd5 should give Black a safe position. Drasko-Gleizerov, Valle d'Aosta 2001 continued 10 Bb2 a5 11 Ne3 Be4 12 a3 Qc8 13 Nc4 Bd5 14 Rc1 h6 15 e3 Qe6 16 Qc2 Ne4 17 Rfd1 f5 18 Ne1 g5 19 Nd3 b6 20 Nd2 Rac8 with even chances.

b) 7...Na6 is an attempt to obtain a symmetrical position, but this is really dangerous. In symmetrical positions the extra tempo often proves to be highly decisive, for example 8 Ne5 c5 9 dxc5 Nxc5 10 Be3 Nce4 11 Nex4 b6 12 Qb3 Bb7 13 Rfe1 Qb8 14 Rac1 Ng4 15 Bxe4 Bxe4 16 Bf4 e5 17 Bg5 Bf5 18 Be7 Re8 19 Bd6 Qb7 20 Nb5 Bh6 21 Rc3 Rac8 22 Ba3 Red8 23 Ncd6 Rxc3 24 Nxc3 Qc7 25 Nd5 1-0 Nikolic-Ftacnik, Bundesliga 2002.

8 bxc3 c5 9 e3! (Diagram 13)

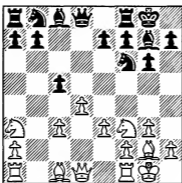


Diagram 13
Portisch's patent

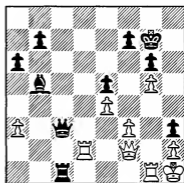


Diagram 14
No defence

This move was invented by Portisch in the late 1980s and has given White many good games ever since. Still, Black need not be afraid; his position also has its positive sides.

9 Ne5 can be met actively with 9...Nc6! 10 Nxc6 bxc6 11 Bxc6 Bh3 12 Re1 Rc8 13 Bb7 Rb8 14 Bf3 Nd5, Nikolic-J.Polgar, Moscow 2002. Here Black has enough compensation for the pawn through her active pieces and lead in development.

9...Nc6 10 Qe2 Nd5

10...Bf5 is probably the main move in recent times, but the text move is certainly no worse.

11 Bb2 Nb6

Besides controlling c4, the knight is also planning to go to a4. With his next move White frees the a1-square for the bishop.

12 Rac1

12 Rfd1 Na4 13 Rac1 Nxb2 14 Qxb2 Qb6 gave Black a decent position in Nogueiras-Ftacnik, Montreal 2002.

12...Qd5 13 c4 Qh5 14 dxc5 Qxc5 15 Bxg7 Kxg7 16 Qb2+ e5 17 Nd2

A position fairly typical for this system. White decided to give up his better structure with 14 dxc5!? in return for active piece play. Black must play accurately in order to keep the balance.

17...Na4

There is nothing particular wrong with this move, but an alternative was 17...Rd8!? 18 Ne4 Qb4, when Black is not worse.

18 Qb3 Qa5 19 Qb5 Nc5 20 Nb3 Nxb3 21 Qxb3 Be6?!

This allows White to attack the centre in a favourable fashion. Better was 21...Rd8 22 Bd5 Qc5 with an equal position.

22 Bd5!

The strongest move, using Black's previous move to provoke weaknesses. White could also try to play for an advantage with 22 Qxb7!? Nb4 23 Nb5 Nxa2 24 Nc7 Bc8 25 Qxa8 Nxc1 26 Rxc1 Qxc7 27 c5, when his position is slightly more pleasant.

22...Rae8

After 22...Qc7 23 Bxe6 fxe6 24 c5 White would have an edge due to his better pawn structure and the possible manoeuvre Na3-b5-d6, perhaps linked with e3-e4 in some scenarios.

23 Nb5!

On its way to d6.

23...Nb4 24 Nd6!?

24 e4! would have consolidated a strong grip on the centre and given Black a passive and unattractive game. Now White allows (forces?) an exchange sacrifice that is anything but a trivial win for him.

24...Nxd5! 25 Nxe8+

White had a sneaky move order, which would give him minimal, but still some, chances to win: 25 cxd5!? Bxd5 26 Qc3 Qxc3! (26...Qxa2? 27 Ra1 Qe2 28 f3! with the threat of 29 Rf2! leaves Black in trouble) 27 Nxe8+ Rxe8 28 Rxc3 Bxa2 29 Ra1 Bd5 and Black will be able to hold the draw with a reasonably accurate defence.

25...Rxe8 26 cxd5 Bxd5 27 Qd3 Be6!

Black is no longer interested in the a-pawn. Keeping the bishop's active is more important.

28 a3 h5!

All Black's chances are on the kingside, so obviously he is trying to open lines there.

29 Qc3 Qd8 30 f3 Qg5 31 e4 h4 32 Kg2 Rh8 33 Rce1 Qh5 34 Rh1 Bd7 35 Qe3 a6 36 Rc1 Bc6

Black has compensation for the exchange, but nothing more. With accurate play, the chances here are level.

37 Kf2 Re8 38 g4!

White is trying to win the game, which is quite understandable. However, he takes too many chances.

38...Qh6 39 g5 Qh5 40 Rhg1 h3 41 Rcd1 Qh4+ 42 Rg3

42 Ke2 Bb5+ is the start of a none-too-pleasant journey for White.

42...Rc8 43 Kg1 Bb5 44 Rg4 Qh8 45 Qb6 Rc6 46 Qf2 Qf8

Having weakened White's kingside, Black now attacks from the other wing.

47 Kh1 Qc8 48 Rgg1 Rc3 49 Rd5 Qc7 50 Rgd1 Bc6 51 R5d3 Bb5 52 R3d2

White refuses the invitation to repeat the position with 52 Rd5, but probably because Black has the strong 52...Rc1! with the idea of ...Bb5-a4 and pressure on the first rank.

52...Rc1!

Anyway! Suddenly White's king is not happy being in the corner.

53 Rg1 Qc3! (Diagram 14)

After this there is no defence. The weakness of f3 and the first rank decides the game.

54 Rdd1 Rc2 55 Qg3 Be2 56 Rdf1 Bxf1 57 Rxf1 Rc1 58 Qxh3 Qa1 59 Rxc1 Qxc1+ 60 Kg2 Qxg5+ 61 Kf2 Qd2+ 62 Kg3 Qf4+ 63 Kf2 Qh6 64 Qd7 Qxh2+ 65 Ke3 Qg1+ 66 Ke2 Qb6 67 Qe7 Qb2+ 68 Kf1 b5 69 f4 Qc1+ 0-1

Game 47

□ Tregubov ■ Degraeve

Belfort 2002

1 d4 Nf6 2 Nf3 g6 3 c4

With this move order (an early c2-c4, as in 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 g3), White avoids the line from the previous game and gives himself the option of cxd5.

3...Bg7 4 g3 0-0 5 Bg2 d5 6 cxd5 Nxd5 7 0-0 Nb6

Played to avoid giving White a free move with e2-e4.

8 Nc3 Nc6 9 d5

9 e3 is another main move here. Black can reply with 9...e5 or the most common move, 9...Re8. Here Khalifman-Smirin, Togliatti 2003 continued 10 d5 Na5 11 Nd4 Bd7 12 e4 c6 13 Re1 cxd5 14 exd5 Rc8 15 Bf4 h6 16 h3 g5 17 Bc1 e6 18 dxe6 Bxe6 19 Nxe6 Rxe6 20 Rxe6 Qxd1+ 21 Nxd1 fxe6 22 Kf1 Nd5 23 Rb1 b6 and a draw was agreed. This is fairly typical for this line. In the final position Black is certainly not worse. His activity compensates fully for the two bishops and better pawn structure that White possesses.

9...Na5 10 e4

Or:

a) 10 Bf4 c6 11 dxc6 seems harmless. After 11...Nxc6 12 Qc1 e5 13 Rd1 Qe7 14 Bg5 f6 15 Be3 Be6 16 Ne4 Rfd8 17 Bc5 Qf7 18 b3 Rxd1+ 19 Qxd1 a draw was agreed in Ljubojevic-Anand, Villarrobledo 2001.

b) 10 Qc2 and now:

b1) Taking the pawn is a bit risky: 10...Nxd5 11 Rd1 c6 12 Ne1 Bd7 13 Nxd5 cxd5 14 Rxd5 e6 15 Rd3 Qc8 16 Qxc8 Bxc8 17 Rb1 Rb8 (Moldobaev-Ye Jiangchuan, Istanbul Olympiad 2000). Now 18 b3 followed by 19 Ba3 would slightly favour White according to Ftacnik, which seems to be right.

b2) Later Ye turned to 10...c6!, which is considered the soundest reply: 11 dxc6 Nxc6 12 Rd1 Bf5 13 e4 Bd7 14 Bf4 Rc8 15 e5 Qe8 16 Qe2 h6 and Black was no worse in Azmaiparashvili-Ye Jiangchuan, Bled Olympiad 2002.

10...c6 11 Bf4!

This has become the main move these days, after it became clear that White achieves nothing by 11 Bg5 h6 12 Bf4, when the move ...h7-h6 might even benefit Black. Now 12...Nac4 (12...cxd5 has also often been played) 13 b3 Bxc3 14 Rc1 cxd5 15 Rxc3 dxe4 16 bxc4 Qxd1 17 Rxd1 Bg4 gave Black at least even chances in Romanishin-Nijboer, Vlissingen 2001.

11...Nac4 12 Qe2 cxd5 13 Nxd5!?

This is an interesting new idea. The pressure on the long diagonal makes the knight exposed on c3, so White decides to exchange it. Though White wins a brilliant game here, it should not be thought of as the refutation of Black's system.

13 exd5 has previously been played in many games and gives Black reasonable chances.

13...Nxd5 14 exd5 Nxb2?!

This seems like a bad idea. The b-pawn does not really matter much in the short term. It was better to go for the d-pawn with 14...Nb6! 15 Rad1 Nxd5 16 Qd2 e6 17 Bh6 Qf6 18 Bxg7 Kxg7, when Black should be okay. White has compensation for the pawn, but not much more.

15 Ne5 Na4 16 Rac1 Nb6 17 Rfd1 g5

Black cannot develop freely. After 17...Bf5 White has 18 g4! Bc8 19 Nc4 with strong pressure.

18 Bd2 Qd6

18...Nxd5? 19 Bxg5 Be6 20 Bxd5 Bxd5 21 Rc5 and White wins.

19 Nc4 Nxc4 20 Qxc4 Bf6

Black has problems keeping his position together. After 20...g4 21 Bb4 Qd7 22 d6 he is in a fix.

21 Bb4 Qb6 22 Qe4

22 d6!? would have been met strongly by 22...Be6.

22...Re8 23 Bf1! (Diagram 15)

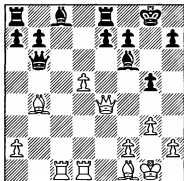


Diagram 15
White plans Bd3

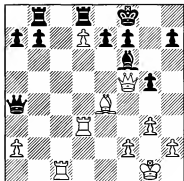


Diagram 16
Black is powerless

23...Bf5 24 Qxf5 Qxb4 25 d6 Red8

25...Kg7 was suggested as equalising by Ftacnik, but after 26 d7! Rh8 27 Rc8 e6 28 Qc2 White is close to winning.

26 d7 Qa4 27 Bg2 Rab8 28 Be4 Kf8 29 Rd3! (Diagram 16)

This is reminiscent of Kramnik-Timman (Game 23), where White also had complete control after advancing the d-pawn to the seventh rank in a position with opposite-coloured bishops.

29...e6?!

This loses by force, but there were no really good alternatives. 29...b5 30 Rc8 Qa5 31 a4 a6 32 Kg2 is assessed as slightly better for White by Ftacnik. That is a strange evaluation when one tries to consider what Black should play on the next move, as nothing seems possible. After 32...Qb6 White wins with 33 axb5 axb5 34 Rd5! e6 35 Rxb8 Qxb8 36 Qxf6 exd5 37 Bxd5.

29...Qxa2! was the best try. When nothing seems to work, why not grab a pawn and hope nothing evil will happen to you?

30 Qxf6! Qxe4 31 Rcd1?

A horrible move that almost allows Black to get back into the game. 31 Rdc3! wins on the spot. After 31...Qg6 32 Qe5 Qf5 33 Qxb8! Rxb8 34 Rc8+ White is a rook up.

31...Qf5 32 Qh8+ Ke7 33 Qd4 b6 34 Qd6+ Kf6 35 Rc3 Rb7?

This loses immediately. Better was 35...Ra8, although after 36 Qc6! Kg6 37 Qxa8 Rxa8 38 Rc8 Qg4 39 Rd2 Qb4 40 Rxa8 Qxd2 41 d8Q Qe1+ 42 Kg2 Qe4+ 43 Kf1 Qb1+ 44 Ke2 Qe4+ 45 Kd2 Qb4+ 46 Ke3 Qe1+ 47 Kd3 Qf1+ 48 Kc3 Qc1+ 49 Kd4 Qa1+ 50 Kc4 Qxa2+ 51 Kb5 Qe2+ 52 Kc6 Qf3+ 53 Kc7 White escapes the checks.

36 Qc6! 1-0

Index of Variations

Classical Exchange Variation

- 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Bc4 0-0 8 Ne2 c5**
8...b6 *60*
8...Nc6 9 0-0
9...e5 *57*
9...b6 *63*
- 9 Be3 Nc6 10 0-0**
10 Rc1 *54*
- 10...Bg4**
10...Bd7 *47*
10...Qc7 *50*
- 11 f3 Na5 12 Bd3**
12 Bxf7+ *17*
- 12...cxd4 13 cxd4 Be6 14 d5 17**
14 Rc1 *17*

Modern Exchange Variation

- 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e4**
5 Na4 *105*
- 5...Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Nf3**
7 Be3 *91*; 7 Bb5+ *105*
- 7...c5 8 Rb1**
8 Be3 Qa5 9 Qd2
9...Nc6 *96*; 9...Bg4 *96*
- 8...0-0 9 Be2 cxd4**
9...Nc6 *78*
9...b6 *72*
9...Qa5 *76*
- 10 cxd4 Qa5+ 11 Bd2 Qxa2 12 0-0 Bg4 82**
12...Nd7 *82*

The Russian Variation

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 Nf3 Bg7 5 Qb3 dxc4 6 Qxc4 0-0 7 e4
 a6
 7...Bg4 *127*
 7...Nc6 *133*
 7...Na6 8 Be2 c5 9 d5 e6
 10 Bg5 *123*
 10 0-0 *123*
 8 e5 *113*
 8 Be2 *113*

Bf4 and Bg5 Systems

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 Nf3
 4 Bf4 *138*
 4 Bg5 *149*
 4...Bg7 5 Bf4
 5 Bg5 Ne4
 6 Bh4 *149*
 6 cxd5 *149*
 5...0-0
 5...c5 *141*
 6 Rc1 dxc4 7 e4 *142*
 7 e3 *142*

Other White Systems

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nf3
 3 Nc3 d5 4 Nf3 Bg7 5 e3 0-0
 6 Qb3 *156*
 6 b4 *156*
 3 g3 c6 4 Bg2 d5 5 cxd5 cxd5 6 Nc3 Bg7
 7 e3 *162*
 7 Nf3 *164*
 3...Bg7 4 g3 0-0 5 Bg2 d5
 5...c6 *162*
 6 0-0
 6 cxd5 *167*
 6...dxc4 *167*

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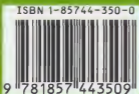
starting out: the grüinfeld

Ideal for those wanting to understand the basics of the Grünfeld

The Grünfeld is an energetic and popular defence to queen's pawn openings and is a favourite of the world number one Garry Kasparov. From the start of the game Black allows White to build an apparently strong centre but then attacks it with all his forces. Play can become extremely sharp and theoretical and this opening very much appeals to dynamic players. In this book, International Master Jacob Aagaard revisits the fundamental principles of the Grünfeld and its numerous variations. Throughout the book there are an abundance of notes, tips and warnings to guide the improving player, while important strategies, ideas and tactics for both sides are clearly illustrated.

- User-friendly design to help readers absorb ideas
- Concentrates on the main ideas of the Grünfeld
- Ideal for the improving player

Jacob Aagaard is an International Master from Denmark who has earned himself a deserved reputation as an industrious and no-nonsense chess author. His previous works for Everyman include *Queen's Indian Defence* and *Meeting 1 d4*. He also authored *Excelling at Chess*, a recent winner of the *ChessCafe.com Book of the Year* award.



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